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THE TRUE PLAN

OF

A LIVING TEMPLE.

1 *Cor.* iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

THE

TRUE PLAN

OF

A LIVING TEMPLE;

OR

MAN CONSIDERED IN HIS PROPER RELATION TO THE ORDINARY OCCUPATIONS AND PURSUITS OF LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE MORNING AND EVENING SACRIFICE,—THE LAST SUPPER,—AND FAREWELL TO TIME.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PART SECOND—CONTINUED.

OBJECT PROPOSED TO MAN

AS A SUBJECT OF

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

ROMANS xii. 11. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

RELIGIOUS SERVICES,—STRICTLY SO CALLED.

PSALM XCV. 6.—*O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* 7.—*For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

THE view exhibited in the preceding observations respecting the object proposed to man as a subject of the kingdom of God, is greatly different from that which is commonly taken,—and will probably be found to have awakened an entirely new train of thought in the minds of most of those who have submitted to the study of it.

When we speak of the object proposed to man,—or of the duty required of him as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—those services which are more

strictly denominated religious services, are apt to present themselves to our minds as, in an especial manner, constituting that duty,—or as the appropriate service which we owe to our Creator;—and it hence becomes necessary to set the true nature of such services in a proper light,—to show what is their essential character,—and to mark, more precisely than is commonly done, the relative place which they hold with respect to the other active and social duties which have alone occupied our thoughts in the observations that have hitherto been made.

And this explanation is the more necessary, not only because a full view of the duty required of man could not have been given while these religious services were left unnoticed,—but because much confusion of thought seems to prevail not only among the multitude of men,—but even among those who have professedly devoted themselves to the discussion of such topics,—respecting the true nature,—and relative place of religious services.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE PROPER NATURE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES,—AND OF THEIR RELATION TO THE OTHER PARTS OF THE DUTY PRESCRIBED TO MAN.

The great object, then, of the preceding remarks has been to show, that the duty required of man as a subject of the kingdom of God,—is not the attainment of perfection,—when perfection is viewed as a distinct and ultimate object of pursuit,—but the faithful and successful discharge of the duties of that station in life which we individually occupy,—as these duties are pointed out to each of us,—by the powers with which we have been individually gifted,—by the relative place in life which we hold,—and by the progressive opportunities which in the course of life are afforded us of following out the plan upon which Divine Providence seems to have intended us to act,—that we may secure the purpose for which we have, individually, been called into existence,—have been stationed in that beautiful department of the Divine kingdom in which we find ourselves,—and have been connected with the various individuals who, with powers also suited to their respective places, have been or-

dained to be our "fellow-workers" in the same grand design.

But, then, we must keep in mind, that this duty must be done by each of us with his whole powers; —and as it is as a religious being that man is distinguished from all the other inhabitants of this world,—as his religious feelings constitute the highest,—and most characteristic parts of his nature,—and as it is by them that he is chiefly qualified to act his part as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—his fulfilment of the duty required of him by his place and relative powers, must be characterized by the exhibition of these feelings in living and constant exercise; —and it is by no means, therefore, sufficient that he devote himself assiduously to the attainment of what have been called temporal advantages,—or to the most diligent performance of the duties of his station, unless he also devote himself to the discharge of these duties with the full exhibition of those powers and characteristic sentiments of his nature, by means of which chiefly he holds his preeminent place in life,—and is qualified to act as an intelligent and religious subject of the Creator's empire.

A great source of perplexity and error has been

introduced into this subject by the subdivisions which men have made of the structure,—and powers of human nature,—with the view of enabling them to speak and write more distinctly respecting the different aspects under which the entire nature of man is capable of being viewed. We have thus become habituated, in consequence of our familiarity with the prevailing subdivisions on this subject,—to regard man under the different aspects of an active,—a social,—a moral,—and a religious being;—we fancy that man really exists, occasionally, under an exclusive exhibition of these several aspects,—or that it is possible to divest him, at certain times, and under certain circumstances, of parts of his nature, which at other times, and amidst other circumstances, he is capable of calling into exercise,—and which, indeed, in particular circumstances, seem to constitute his chief or peculiar excellences.

All this, however, it ought to be kept in mind, is merely the result of our technical processes of thought, instituted for the purpose of enabling us,—when attempting to speak precisely,—or, as we term it, philosophically, upon this subject,—to discourse or write with more facility to ourselves,—and, as we fancy, with a greater probability of advantage to

those for whom our dissertations are intended. It ought never, however, to be forgotten, that it is not in this subdivided and fragmented state that man really exists as a living and active being,—and holds his place as a subject of that kingdom which God exercises over all his works. On the contrary, the active,—and social,—and moral,—and religious nature of man, exists in one wonderful and entire structure of faculties;—in all his living exertions, every one of these, more or less, holds a part;—and it is only in our abstract and technical modes of viewing him,—that he assumes the aspect of a being whose nature is susceptible of such subdivision of powers.

Now, it has been repeatedly stated,—but the observation is so important that it cannot be too frequently presented to our notice,—that the religious sentiments and powers of man,—which we not unfrequently are disposed to separate from his more active propensities,—are at once the highest,—the finest,—and the most characteristic of his powers,—those which give him his pre-eminent place in life,—which fit him for discharging his duty with feelings,—and passions,—and hopes,—essentially different from those which belong to all the other beings by whom he is surrounded,—and without

the pervading influence of which, on all the other parts of his thoughts and actions, he neither displays his *entire* nature, as it was intended by his Creator to be displayed,—nor can fulfil, in a becoming manner, the duties, even of the active,—and social stations in life,—which he has been appointed to fill.

Suppose, however, that these high feelings,—and characteristic propensities of his nature, are in full operation,—and are influencing all his habitual modes of acting,—and feeling,—and thinking,—then his whole view of life,—of his own place in it,—and of the duty required of him, undergoes a great and delightful change.

That department of the universe in which his station has been assigned him assumes,—upon this supposition,—the aspect of one portion of the boundless and glorious kingdom of God.

Man himself,—as an inhabitant of this portion of the universe,—becomes invested, in his own eyes, with the majestic character of a subject of that dominion which God is exercising, for the good of his creatures, over all worlds.

And, as a consequence of these high views, to which his religious sentiments exalt him,—the du-

ties of that station in life which man feels himself to hold, however apparently humble that station and its correspondent duties may be, assume the aspect of a sacred trust committed to him by God for the good of his kingdom,—and constitute, in fact, the sphere, by the due occupation of which he is to prove his fidelity, as a loyal and obedient subject of the Divine government. Insomuch,—that the more apparently humble or relatively unimportant these duties,—the more imperious is the obligation under which man finds himself laid,—so long as he considers them as the appointment of God for the trial of his fidelity,—not to be "unfaithful in his trust,"—but rather to believe that God can, by the wonderful course of his providence, make even the most apparently unimportant means to issue in the production of most abundant good.

Such is the view of human duty, or of the object proposed to man, which has been unfolded in that portion of the present work which has already been completed;—and the reader will perceive, that its grand distinction is the light in which it sets the importance of the religious nature of man,—considering that portion of his nature not as something distinct from the rest, but as that part which is en-

titled to give character and tone to all the other and subordinate feelings which constitute the entire structure of his frame;—for it is by the operation of this part of his nature, or of the sentiments and views which it discloses, that he is led to regard the glorious scheme of things, amidst which he is placed, as a beautiful portion of the empire of God into which he has been put, with powers adapted to the objects around him;—to consider himself, consequently, as "a subject" of that rule which God is exercising over all his works,—and to regard the exact fulfilment of the duties of his place, as a token of his obedience to his Supreme Lord, and a mark of his loyalty to that Sovereign who has thus raised him to the dignity of being "a fellow-worker" with himself for the more full disclosure of his purposes of boundless and ever-increasing good.

This, then, is the true purpose of those religious feelings with which man is gifted,—and by the possession of which he holds his place as the sovereign of that subordinate world in which his Creator has stationed him;—the proper object of these fine and peculiar feelings is to give a higher character and aim to all his other duties and purposes,—and, by their pervading influence, to exalt even his least

important duties into the high character of tokens of his obedience to the supreme will of the Universal Sovereign.

These explanations seem now to have been given with sufficient fulness,—though the importance of the subject, and the indistinctness which characterizes the speculations of most men respecting it,—appear to warrant any instances of repetition which may have been apparent in our statement of it;—and we may now therefore proceed, in a few words, to answer the important question with which we commenced this portion of the treatise,—and which cannot but have pressed itself on the mind of the reader throughout the greater part of the discussions in which we have been engaged.

The question is simply this,—What, then, is the nature of those services which have been more especially denominated religious services? What value have they as a part of the duty required of man? And how are we to view them relatively to those more active exertions which, when sanctified by the pervading influence of a religious feeling, have been already so fully stated to be the grand constituents of that duty, by which man is to display his loyalty to his gracious and beneficent Sovereign?

And these questions are the more important to be answered,—because, after what has been said, it may occur to some minds that, provided a man does the duties of his station in life, and does them in a religious spirit, there is no need of any other religious services;—that he has in fact fulfilled his sole and his entire duty;—and that those services which are more strictly religious, are, hence, but a miserable substitute which the indolence and folly of men have placed in the room of those more active duties which alone, when fulfilled in their proper spirit, constitute the service demanded by God of his intelligent subjects,—and are suitable to the high sentimental,—but at the same time active and progressive nature of man to pay.

The answer, however, to this suggestion is simple and complete. It is as a *religious being* that man holds his place in life, and exhibits his characteristic excellences;—and though his religious feelings ought to pervade and to ennoble all his active duties, it is also proper that he should occasionally perform certain services by which his religious faculties are more especially recognized and denoted;—services intended to signify that he glories in the high distinction given him, as a being capable of holding

intercourse with the Supreme Mind,—and which are understood to flow *more directly and exclusively* from his religious feelings, and to be a token of his thankfulness to God for having given him so distinguished an honour.

This, then, is the true nature of *religious services*;—they are *direct expressions* of those peculiar,—and high,—and characteristic feelings which belong to man;—they are intended to denote his thankfulness to God for so high a distinction;—and to express,—by certain significant or characteristic acts,—the disposition and the capacity which he feels of holding, by means of his religious faculties, *direct intercourse* with the Supreme Being, as not only the Author of his existence,—but, in a more especial manner, as the object of his adoration.

Over all the earth, accordingly, such testimonies of the high and characteristic feelings of men have been paid by them in forms suited to their varying degrees of attainment and of civilization,—because, whatever may have been the errors of speculative men,—or however low the nature of man may in some situations have been degraded,—the essential sentiments of human nature can never be entirely eradicated or repressed;—and man, everywhere feeling

himself to be *essentially a religious being*,—and to hold, by means of his religious feelings, his pre-eminent place among the works of God,—has, accordingly, everywhere been anxious to express his sense of this distinction;—and by Altars,—and Temples,—and solemn Processions;—or by Prayers,—and Hymns,—and devout Conferences of some kind or other,—has, in all situations, testified his indelible impression of the high rank which he holds in existence,—and of the sacred relationship into which the Author of his being has been pleased to adopt him.

Religious services, strictly so called, are thus *direct expressions* of those religious feelings which bind man to his Creator, and to things invisible and eternal,—and which man has everywhere felt to constitute his peculiar and characteristic honour. This idea will be more fully evolved,—and illustrated by a variety of considerations, in the remaining subdivisions of this section.

CORRECTION OF AN IMPERFECT ACCOUNT OF THE TRUE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

It has been common with many authors of high name,—and especially with authors who have sought to give a more rational or philosophical tone to the devout feelings of men,—to speak of religious services as valuable or obligatory solely from the *good effects* which they are adapted to produce on the hearts and lives of those who perform them.

Thus, among many other passages to the same purpose, which occur in the works of an author of high philosophical merit,—to whom, in the preceding parts of this work, we have had repeated occasions of referring,—we find the following, where he professes to speak of "certain things, indifferent in themselves, which have been enjoined, that we may have an opportunity of exercising our obedience in performing the injunction."

"In these," continues our author, "consists Religion, strictly so called, when distinguished from morality; and they are termed *divine services*, not that we can suppose them of any service to God, but because, being of no direct apparent service either to ourselves or our fellow-creatures, we per-

form them upon *an opinion* of their being pleasing in his sight; which gives them a similar efficacy upon our minds with actual good works done upon the same motive of pleasing him. Therefore are they unquestionably of important service both to ourselves and all whom we may have to deal with, as they nourish in us a habitual trust and dependence upon the Almighty; which may ensure us tranquillity of mind in times of difficulty or danger, and beget in us a readiness to that which alone he will esteem a service to himself, the doing good to his creatures, and joining in every general interest where he shall be pleased to afford us an opportunity of becoming in any little degree instrumental.

"This, then, being their design, if we keep this in memory, it will help to direct us to the use and application of them; for we are not to imagine ourselves the better merely for having attended divine services, sermons, private prayer, psalm-singing, reading, meditation, or the like, but for the effect worked by them upon our hearts, in the improvement of any good habitual sentiment."

Another example of the same mode of viewing religious services may be found in the following passage from the Sermons of Zollikoffer, which, though

abounding with the most enlightened views upon all religious topics, are, however, pervaded by the exact style of thinking which it is our object in this portion of the work to correct:—"Social and public worship," says this author, "as well as all worship in general, has no value whatever as an ultimate end, but only as conducive to some higher purpose. As eating and drinking, bodily motion and exercise, are not ends, but means of preserving our terrestrial life, of establishing our health and improving our faculties; so likewise instruction and reflection, all worship and exercises of piety, are no more than means of nourishing our spirit, of inspiring us with desire and ability to goodness, and thereby of promoting our perfection and happiness. The same holds good of private worship, and of all that we observe and practise in divine service. We thus worship God, not for the sake of worshipping him, for he wants not our homage and our service; but we worship him from the deep and lively sense we have of his greatness and perfection, and our dependence upon him, to invigorate every pure sentiment, to vanquish every turbulent passion, to dismiss every corroding care, and to increase our readiness and aptitude to all that is just and right, that is gene-

rous and great. We pray, not for the sake of praying, for God knows what we want, and does continually what is best; but we pray for the sake of elevating our minds, of purifying and composing our hearts, and of rendering ourselves fitter for the mercy of God, and more susceptible of the influences of his Spirit. We allow ourselves to be instructed in our duties, in the true end of our creation, and in the will of the Highest, not for the sake of being instructed in these matters, but that we may the better fulfil our obligations, more certainly answer the purpose for which we were placed on the earth, and more faithfully comply with the will of our Maker.——And thus," concludes our author, "are the several acts of worship not ends but means. We use them, not on their own account, but for the good effects and consequences they may and are fitted to produce. In these consists all the value of worship."

Now, the preceding quotations, considered simply as intended to correct the errors of those who think that they have discharged all their duty to God, by having given attendance on religious services, however little affected their hearts may have been during the time of attendance,—or however void of all

practical effect their devotional forms may be on their habitual conduct,—are highly valuable, and worthy of being seriously weighed. At the same time, if viewed, as they seem not unnaturally to present themselves, as an account of the true nature and significancy of religious forms,—every person must feel that they do not give complete satisfaction to our natural impressions with respect to the essential character of such services;—the great mass of religious men, too, when pressed with such representations of the nature of divine worship, never fail to express their conviction that such services have in them something different from that of "means" only, for the cultivation of good feelings or of uniformly virtuous conduct;—and the views previously exhibited respecting the true nature of religious services, will, accordingly, help us to a solution of these difficulties, which seems to satisfy all our feelings,—and which, indeed, presents to us these services under a peculiarly august and venerable character.

According, then, to the account given in the preceding section, religious services are *directly expressive* of certain high sentiments and feelings which constitute us religious beings,—from the possession of which we hold our pre-eminent place among the

works of God,—and by the exercise of which we are fitted for *holding communion* with him,—and of feeling ourselves brought into an intimate and kindly alliance with him.

Such services, therefore, are proper and valuable, not simply for the good effects which they may produce upon our moral feelings and habitual conduct, but as expressions of the peculiarly high and nobly endowed nature with which we have been gifted,—and by which we hold our supreme station as representatives of God in this lower world;—and the man, consequently, who neglects such services, not only fails to give due cultivation to his moral nature and highest sentiments,—but he fails in the discharge of a duty which, *independent of all such effects*, is imposed on him by the very possession of the high and gloriously endowed nature with which his Creator has honoured him;—while, on the other hand, the man who conscientiously devotes himself to all acts of piety, not only adopts the best means of saving himself from evil impressions, and of improving his virtuous feelings, throughout all their varieties,—but he does what *as a religious*,—and sentimental,—and highly endowed being, he is bound to do, from the peculiar relation into which,

by the possession of such a nature, he has been brought to that Supreme Mind, from whom all things have originated.

And from this view of the matter it follows, that though a man should adopt and carefully avail himself of all the other means conducive to a good life, yet if he neglects to cultivate and to express, by pious acts, his devotional feelings,—he has failed in acting agreeably to that which constitutes, in fact, the grandest and most characteristic part of his nature;—he has failed to show himself a *pious* man; —and the want of this character is really a deficiency in the possession or exercise of those pre-eminently grand sentiments and feelings which give to man his characteristic station among those other productions of the Divine mind, by whom he is surrounded.

This is a view of the character of religious services, which deserves to be most carefully weighed, —because it leads to most important results, in the opinions which we form of the conduct of other men,—and in the means which we adopt for the regulation of our own lives.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES, VIEWED IN REFERENCE TO THE CHARACTERS IN WHICH THE DIVINE BEING MAY BE REGARDED AS STANDING WITH RESPECT TO US.

Our most common mode of viewing the Divine Being is under certain characters, corresponding with those borne by our fellow-men,—but exalted into pre-eminent grandeur by the high and holy association in which, when thinking of God, we place these characters.

In considering ourselves, for example, as we have commonly done throughout this treatise, as "subjects of the Divine kingdom," we think of God under the character of a Sovereign or Lawgiver,—who has given to his intelligent creatures a moral nature, by which they are made capable of apprehending the obligation of a law;—and the tendency of which is to make them feel themselves to be at all times,—and under every conceivable combination of circumstances, subject to the authority, and responsible to the justice, of their Sovereign Lord.

Sometimes we vary our mode of considering God, by representing him to our minds,—under the character, simply, of a Master,—of whom we are "the

servants,"—who can dispose of us at his pleasure,—and for whose designs we are bound at all times to labour.

And, on other occasions, we think of God as "our Father who is in Heaven;"—who has called us out of non-existence, that we might be partakers of his boundless loving-kindness;—and who, even when he seems to speak to us with the authority of a Lawgiver or Master,—has yet nothing in view, by even the most apparently severe of his injunctions, but our substantial and final welfare.

Now, even when we view God only under the characters we have now enumerated, the importance of those services which are more strictly entitled Divine services, is easily apprehended. Thus, it is no doubt the chief duty of "a Subject" to show his loyalty to his Sovereign by an active and implicit co-operation with him in promoting the purposes which, as a Sovereign, he is understood to have in view. Yet there are also testimonies of this loyalty which are *more directly* expressive of the feeling of a subject,—and with which a kind and beneficent Sovereign is always supposed to be well pleased. In the same manner, the true duty of "a Servant" to a master is expressed by a ready submission to all his

commandments; but yet there are tokens of obedience *more directly* aiming at the expression of his feelings as "a servant,"—or of his reverence and respect for his Master, which it is also suitable to his station as a servant that he should occasionally pay.

And, exactly in the same style of representation, it may be said, that though the true duty of "a Son" lies in a ready and affectionate attention to all the intimations of the will of his father,—still it is proper that he should, at some times, express his filial affection by tokens of love or of submission,—which have the manifestation of these feelings *directly* as their object.

Let us apply these illustrations to our present purpose.—Although our chief duty to God, as our Supreme Lawgiver and Sovereign, lies in co-operating with him,—by active exertions on our part,—in the promotion of those grand designs, by which he intends that the interests of his universal kingdom should be advanced,—there are also expressions of our submission, which it is suitable to our station as "subjects" to pay, and by which we are understood to offer to our Sovereign a direct acknowledgment of our reverence and obedience. Thus, also, when we regard God as our Master and Lord,—our duty is no doubt

chiefly and habitually to be expressed by a prompt discharge of all the obligations under which, as active and social beings, we lie to the fulfilment of his injunctions ;—but yet it is proper that for so high a Master we should also occasionally testify our veneration by actions or expressions distinct from the habitual reverence, which, as active beings, we pay to his commandments. And, in the same manner, regarding God as our Heavenly Father, though our filial affection is most properly manifested by a conduct becoming Sons,—it were also a great want in our characters as sons, if we did not, at some times, give to God some more characteristic and immediate tokens of the supreme affection and reverence with which his character, as our best and Heavenly Father, has inspired us.

Now, these *direct tokens* of our reverence,—or submission,—or love,—are those religious services, —in the consideration of which, as distinct from active duty, we are at present more particularly employed ;—and from this account of their nature it is evident,—as was also made apparent by the preceding views,—that they have a value or character distinct from that of their mere efficacy as means of moral improvement ;—because the man who neglects

such testimonies of his reverence, fails to act suitably to the highest and most characteristic of all the relations in which he stands to God;—and he, on the other hand, who fulfils these duties in a proper spirit,—offers a testimony of his submission or love, which is most correspondent with *his high nature*, and suitable to the relation in which he stands to the greatest and best of beings.

But we have now to remark,—that, besides the characters of a Sovereign,—or Master,—or Father, in which we may view the Divine Being as standing to us,—there is another character, which more particularly and directly allies him with our religious feelings,—and the consideration of which cannot be omitted when we are speaking of those services which are peculiarly religious,—and which are paid to him more directly under this new character. It is the character or relation to us which is more appropriately expressed by the term God,—that is, the object of adoration,—the Being revealed to us by our devout feelings,—and to whom these feelings are expressed by certain specific and characteristic acts, as their peculiar and becoming manifestations.

In all languages there are words corresponding, in their signification, with that which we employ

when we speak of the Supreme Being as *God*;—nor can we attach any other idea to this word,—and to the corresponding terms in all the varieties of human speech,—but that of the object to whom, though to us his nature is unknown, we feel ourselves bound by our religious sentiments,—and to whom, consequently, we address ourselves under this relation, when we apply ourselves to the performance of any of those actions which are more peculiarly and directly religious services.

And, if the very existence of a term in all languages, corresponding with our word God,—shows how deeply and indelibly the impression denoted by that word is felt by even the rudest minds,—the existence of such feelings, as a characteristic and peculiar part of human nature, ought to convince those who set at nought those services which are peculiarly religious,—that, in so doing, they are really disregarding the most universally-felt sentiments,—and profoundest convictions of that essentially-religious nature with which they are endowed.

It may only be proper to add to these observations,—that the feeling denoted by the term God,—and which points out the Supreme Being as especially the object of religious worship, mingles

itself even with those other impressions of his character, which represent him more habitually as a Sovereign,—or a Master,—or a Father;—and, on the other hand, that, even when we are offering religious homage,—and, consequently, addressing God as simply the object of adoration,—that is to say, under the character distinctively expressed by the word *God*,—our minds are so framed,—that the other images of a Father,—or Master,—or Sovereign,—will occasionally offer themselves to our thoughts, with the effect of giving greater distinctness and power to our feelings;—and that thus the whole of these ideas affect each other interchangeably,—and agitate our minds with a variety and succession of conceptions during all our devotional reveries;—the ideas which enter into our conceptions being, however, in every instance, characterized either by a majesty or a beauty of the purest and most ennobling kind.

Still it is true,—that, in our active duties, we serve God chiefly under the character of a Lawgiver,—or Master,—or "Father, who is in Heaven;"—and that when we address ourselves to the performance of those services which are more peculiarly religious, we approach him under that character

which is denoted directly by the term God;—that is to say, as the unknown object of those sentiments which constitute us devout and religious beings,—and which fit us for *holding communion* with the inconceivable Source of all grandeur and excellence.

APPLICATION OF THE PRECEDING REMARKS TO THE ACTS OF RELIGIOUS SERVICE APPROPRIATED TO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

The acts more peculiarly appropriated to the religious services of Christianity,—are prayer,—reading of the Word of God,—public meeting of Christians for social worship,—devout meditation,—acts of devotion suited to more interesting events that occur in life,—Baptism,—the Lord's Supper,—and religious services for the benefit of those who have the prospect of soon quitting life;—with respect to all of which, we mean to illustrate the same principle,—viz. that they are all acts directly expressive of feelings that are essential to human nature,—that hold a pre-eminent place in it,—and by means of which we enjoy the high privilege of "communion with God."

And, first, with respect to *prayer*,—those who

have undertaken to defend the propriety of it against the attacks of impious or worldly-minded men, have, in general, taken too low ground for the construction of their defences,—by either confining themselves entirely to the *good effects* which this devout exercise is fitted to produce on the minds of those who engage in it, or by representing it simply as a *condition* appointed by God for the communications of his grace to the soul of man. Something, accordingly, is always felt by devout men to be wanting in the validity or completeness of the defence which is reared on these grounds;—and their indestructible and most cherished feelings always suggest to them, that there is something in the nature of the duty itself, which, independent of such *effects*, presses its propriety upon their minds,—and which, indeed, represents it to them as not only the most solemn duty, but the highest privilege and honour of our nature.

Now this ground of defence is at once justified, when we take into account the essentially religious nature of man, and the peculiarly high and characteristic place which his religious sentiments hold in the constitution of his nature. Prayer thus assumes the aspect of an act of *devout communion*

with God,—the aspect under which devout men have in all ages delighted to regard it—and to speak of it;—and as it thus appears to be indeed the highest privilege of our nature, that we are permitted to approach that "throne of Divine grace," which is at all times open to the supplications of men,—and are assured that a blessing is provided for those who avail themselves of this privilege in a becoming spirit,—we see, in this aspect also of this duty, the great defect which exists in the feelings and conduct of those who, upon any pretence whatever, live without availing themselves of this privilege;—the debasement into which, amidst the petty cares of this life, they have been guilty of permitting the finest and most valuable parts of their nature to sink,—and their insensibility to what, if their whole nature were in its just operation, they would be disposed to regard as the most inestimable advantage,—and the truest honour, by which the condition of man, as the possessor of a frail and suffering nature, and the inhabitant of a subordinate station among the works of God, is distinguished,—that, namely, of being permitted "to hold communion with God,"—and amidst all his perplexities and feebleness "to pour out," with the as-

surance of a blessing, "his requests at the throne of Grace."

Reading the Scriptures is another act of Christian devotion to which the same general observation is applicable.

Many men refrain from this most becoming duty under the impression that they already are acquainted with everything which the Scriptures contain,—and that it is only for the information which the sacred volume is capable of communicating that its perusal can be regarded as a duty.

Now it matters nothing to our present argument what ideas we may have formed respecting the kind or degree of inspiration by which the Scriptures are characterized,—or in what way God prepared the minds of the sacred writers for the communications which their writings contain. All the various ways in which this preparation may have been made are consistent with the grand aspect which, to the mind of every truly-devout man, the sacred books now assume,—that, namely, of their being the *Word of God* by means of which he holds intercourse with his creatures, and continues from age to age to in-

struct them respecting the plans of his providence, and the sentiments and conduct to which he gives his approbation.

It is then as the *Word of God* revealing his mind to his creatures, that a devout man takes this sacred volume into his hands;—and whatever may be the opinions he has formed respecting the methods in which the sacred writers were prepared for being the oracles of God,—it is simply as his messengers, delivering a written communication to men, that, in his acts of devout reading, he regards the intimations of Divine truth. This accordingly is the impression which the devout of all ages have had of the sacred volume,—and the title of the *Word of God* is that under which they have most delighted to speak of it. And when this impression of its character is admitted, we see at once the solemn obligation under which we are to avail ourselves diligently of the liberty of perusing it,—or rather the high privilege which has been conferred on us in having at all times *a written word* to which we can come as to "the oracle of Divine truth," and from whose pure waters of consolation we can find refreshment and strength to our souls.

Here again, therefore, we see the high ground

we are authorised to take in recommending the study of the Scriptures,—and the fearful error into which those men fall, who, upon any pretence of superior information, neglect to avail themselves of so high a privilege,—and so pure a source of satisfaction.

The propriety of *public worship*,—and the error of those who, on any grounds, systematically neglect to engage in its services, will be readily apprehended from the same general consideration.

Because it is not as simply an insulated individual that man holds his peculiar nature, or is made a recipient of the blessings of Divine Providence. On the contrary, he is one member of a race, all of whom bear the same high nature,—are affected by the same sentiments,—have been made the subjects of the same gracious government,—and are connected together by innumerable ties,—which render it proper that their thanksgivings and petitions should be expressed by the united prayers and hymns of multitudes.

Indeed it is one of the most beautiful aspects of Divine Providence, that while it is loading men individually with many constantly-experienced blessings, it also makes them, as members of families,—

and communities,—and more generally as parts of the vast multitude of beings who all bear the same human nature,—the subjects of benefits of the most interesting and endearing kind.

We accordingly find mankind delighting, in their merely temporal capacities, to communicate and express their feelings of relationship by acts which unite them as fellow-heirs of the same blessings;—and surely the most becoming and august of all services, is that which associates multitudes of men,—by acts of the most solemn kind,—in the expression of feelings which are the highest and most valuable that belong to our nature;—and indeed so evident is the propriety of this consideration, that there is not perhaps a human heart that would refuse to acknowledge its power, if the consideration itself were always presented in the beautiful light which properly invests it;—or, that, under the influence of this feeling, would not be disposed to consider the solemn "meeting together" of Christians for the expression of their common feelings and blessings as men possessed of the same high and religious nature, and heirs of the same great hopes,—to be the most truly interesting and becoming service in which it is possible for them to engage.

And here, again, we perceive the great mistake of those who, upon any pretence of religious information or refinement, habitually absent themselves from such assemblies,—and who thus set at nought one of the most solemn and becoming services that, as religious beings, we are privileged and honoured to perform.

Devout meditation, or occasional communion with our own hearts, by a serious review of our lives,—and of the wonderful courses of Divine Providence towards us individually, is another act of piety which is enjoined by the same general voice, —and of which devout men in all ages have gladly availed themselves.

Indeed some of the purest and most enlightened minds that have adorned our nature, have not only been in the habit of performing such acts of devout self-communion, but have urged its propriety as a duty more deserving the attention of Christians in general, than it is commonly understood to be. And though it is true, that habits of this kind are apt to degenerate into the extravagances of enthusiasm,—and are sometimes connected with a fearlessness of

feeling and of opinion, which is not worthy of being imitated,—yet there is great beauty and many important advantages in the duty when properly performed,—and it comes to us recommended by the same general considerations which evince the propriety of all other acts of religious service.

For it is to be recollected, that God, in the course of his providence, speaks to us individually by means of those events which are successively evolving themselves in the progress of our lives,—and that he seems thus to have spread out the series of his dispensations before us, as a beautiful display of his intentions regarding us,—and as "a lesson written by his own finger," which it is our duty to study and to treasure up for future use.

Every man, too, passes through a series of events which make his own history the most interesting and instructive of all tales for his individual perusal;—all the events of that history, too, are so intimately and beautifully connected, that the more carefully we study them, the more shall we perceive their extensive influence on each other,—and the deeper will be our impression of the invaluable lessons which, by means of these events, God is at every moment presenting to our notice and recommend-

ing to our study ;—and thus the attentive and silent examination of these events, or of the courses of Divine Providence towards us individually, becomes a duty of a truly religious kind, without the careful discharge of which we cannot act up to the high and essential grandeur of the nature we possess, nor avail ourselves of many of the most interesting and beautiful of the lessons which Divine Providence is daily furnishing for our use.

And hence we see the great propriety, in one sense, of what has been called the study of "the inward life" in the soul of man,—that is to say, of the courses of Divine Providence as made manifest to us by our individual histories,—and of the relation of these events to our progress in all purity of feeling and becoming steadfastness of purpose.

And, generally, it is thus, that when we take into account the essentially religious nature of man,—or his intimate connexion with a fine plan, which is constantly advancing,—and his interest in the lessons which God, by his wonderful arrangement of our individual lots in life, is constantly presenting to the notice of all men,—we perceive the essential propriety of the duty of studying these lessons by the habit of devout contemplation of the events of

life,—and are made sensible that the cultivation of such habits belongs to that Divine service, which is suitable to the high and spiritual nature of man as a religious and immortal being.

Besides those religious services which are of regular occurrence,—and which are accommodated to the usual flow of events,—there are acts of more solemn piety,—which are demanded by the occurrence of incidents that apply with a deeper power to our fears or our hopes, or by our finding ourselves in the midst of circumstances that make us more alive to our need of the co-operating and directing grace of God.

Such changes, in the course of events, are occasionally occurring to all men;—and, if our minds are as they ought to be,—that is to say, if our religious feelings are in a state of habitual cultivation, we shall find these changes addressing themselves more especially to our religious nature, and disposing us to avail ourselves of those helps which pious exercises are peculiarly fitted to afford, amidst the perplexities and fears that encompass us.

Devout men, in all ages, have accordingly been

in the habit of consecrating seasons marked by the occurrence of such changes, to acts of peculiar and more fervent approach to "the throne of grace;"—and, indeed, as God is evidently speaking to us—as religious beings,—in a more solemn and commanding manner, by such events, there is manifest propriety in listening with becoming attention to the voice which his dispensations are thus addressing to us individually,—and, as it were, putting ourselves more solemnly under his protection, when the violence of the storm is apparently loosening us from all our usual holds amidst the sea of life.

Thus, also, then, we see the coincidence of such acts of occasional and more fervent piety with the characteristic feelings and sentiments of the high nature which we bear as religious beings,—to whom, consequently, God is occasionally addressing himself in more impressive terms, by the more awakening changes that occur in life;—and hence, also, we perceive the error of those who neglect, amidst such changes, to avail themselves of the helps which Divine goodness is so manifestly offering to them for their consolation and support amidst all earthly vicissitudes.

The *emblematic rites* of Christianity are not only positive appointments of its Founder,—but have a meaning of high and comprehensive interest, connected with the very nature which we bear,—and with our situation in this sinful, but yet favoured department of the kingdom of God.

Thus Baptism, or "the washing with water," as a symbol of internal purity, though administered but once, and at the commencement of life, is a ceremony which may be witnessed with the very best effects by persons at all periods of life; and assumes, under this aspect, a "high and holy meaning," most interestingly connected with our condition as beings who have been born into a world in which "sin abounds;"—but who are yet bound to keep, in so far as human frailty may permit, "clean hands and pure hearts in the sight of God;"—and occasional attendance on this ceremony, whether performed before the congregation, or in the privacy of domestic life, may thus be regarded as a service, by means of which even the most aged may be reminded of the pure "oath" which their profession implies,—and of the truly-divine origin of that faith, which seeks,

at our very entrance on life, to bind us, in "a covenant" of purity, to the eternal Source of all Excellence.

It is, accordingly, pleasing to observe, that the ceremony is always thus viewed by those, who, instead of being misled by the vain speculations of men, are guided solely by their devout impressions; —and the Author has frequently had occasion to witness with what an earnest application to their own feelings and hopes this initiation of "the infant soul" into "the covenant of reconciliation" is witnessed, by means of the high and pure thoughts which it awakens, by multitudes of those meek and humble spirits, "of whom is the kingdom of Heaven."

For the same reason, the Author is of opinion, that the duty of occasional attendance on the celebration of this rite ought to be recommended with more earnestness upon Christians in general, as a beautiful mean of awakening their sense of the spirit of their faith, than is at present done by the public teachers of Christianity.

And, if Baptism thus reminds us of the vow which is taken for us even at our entrance upon life,

to avoid all "the evil that is in the world,"—the other emblematic rite of the Gospel,—the "eating bread and drinking wine," in commemoration of the death of Him who "died for our sins,"—is fitted to remind us of "the forgiveness" which we need for the many failures that have marked our conduct during the progress of that course, on which, when our infant heads were first sprinkled with the water of baptism, we began to advance. This most august of all the Christian ceremonies is thus, in truth, a beautiful act of "thanksgiving for Divine mercy" to a race of beings who have all sinned, but respecting whom their Heavenly Father yet condescends to remember that they "are but dust;"—and, besides its positive enactment, it thus becomes a ceremony expressive of some of the deepest and most affecting feelings which belong to human nature;—and assumes, in this sense, an aspect which adapts it to the condition of all those who feel that they have become victims of sin,—and need assurance of "the forgiving grace of God" to preserve their hearts in comfort and in hope.

So that, with respect to both of these ceremonies, —the same general remark is applicable,—namely, —that by the high and pure feelings which they are

fitted to awaken,—they are, even independent of all positive appointment, most becoming expressions of our religious feelings,—and suited to our condition as beings, who, by means of these feelings, are brought into a peculiarly interesting relation to the Father of our spirits.

There are, lastly, *religious exercises suited to those who are about to depart from life*,—but, with respect to which there are some very erroneous views, which are apt to be embraced by those whose minds are occupied with the business,—or perverted by the low theories of the world.

It is thus sometimes maintained by persons of this description,—that as a man's fate must depend upon the whole of his conduct during life, there must be something either altogether nugatory, or essentially delusive, in any services performed at its close,—as a means of rescuing us from the consequences of our former course of conduct. With such views, they accordingly either treat all religious services performed for the dying with contempt,—or merely *permit* them, as a means of soothing the

mistaken fears of those who are agitated by the awful prospect of bidding farewell to life.

But the views of the nature of religious services which we are endeavouring to exhibit, lead our minds to different opinions respecting the propriety and suitableness of such exercises, even in the case of those who can give no more active testimonies of their submission to the will of God. For such services, when performed at the request of the dying, are a testimony on their part that they feel the essentially religious consitution of the nature with which they are gifted,—and are willing to express at once their "submission" to the appointments of Divine Providence,—their "contrition" for their offences,—and their "hope" that the mercy and loving-kindness, which, even amidst many failures, has attended them through life,—will continue to be manifested towards them amidst all the untried changes through which their immortal nature has yet to pass.

When a human being is thus placed in the most awful and trying of all situations,—such services, accordingly, assume an aspect of peculiar *suitableness* to his condition;—and may be regarded as a *parting token* given by his spirit, before leaving life, of its acknowledgment of the high and intimate relation in

which it is willing to consider itself as standing to the eternal Fountain of Being.

The real impropriety, therefore, is not on the part of those who request the performance of such services,—but of those who have so far become insensible to the *religious constitution* of their nature, as to have lost their perception of the appropriateness of such services to the condition of man at all the periods,—and amidst all the changes of his progressive and suffering condition.

It is, accordingly, worthy of remark, that the dying, whose minds are well disposed,—and who are guided, in their last moments, more by the essential feelings of their nature than by merely human reasonings or views,—always regard the performance of such services in the light in which they have now been represented,—and commonly feel an anxious wish to receive the benefit of such devout acts, as an expression of their submission to God, and an acknowledgment of their sense of the relation in which as religious beings they feel themselves to stand to him.

This, also, as every well-disposed heart must be aware, is the true light in which such services for the dying ought to be regarded.

The conclusion, then, which we are warranted to draw from the whole of the preceding observations is,—that what are strictly called religious services,—are not merely valuable, as is sometimes supposed, from their subserviency to the cultivation of our other and more active feelings and habits,—but have a *propriety in themselves*, as acts *directly* expressive of certain high feelings which belong to human nature;—feelings from the very possession of which we hold our place in life, and are characterized by the peculiarly exalted nature which we bear;—and the effect of which is to give us a sense of our relation to the invisible Author of existence,—and to that order of things which constitutes the "unseen" but eternal world.

And it is of great importance that religious services should be viewed in this august light;—because the habit of regarding them simply as means of improvement has a tendency to lead, and does, in fact, often lead to the belief, that, provided we take due care of our conduct generally, there is no essential neglect on our part by want of attendance on services which are only valuable for their influence on

conduct,—and *our* inattention to which does not render *us* worse men than those who most scrupulously observe them. But it ought to be recollected by those who think thus, that whatever may be their conduct in other respects, they have failed to conduct themselves as *religious beings ought to act*;—they have thus, in fact, "taken the diadem from their heads," and consented to become the slaves of mere earthly cares and earthly labours;—they have rejected *communion with God*, by means of those acts which most directly express such intercourse;—and have become insensible to the fact that it is as beings capable of performing such services,—and of feeling the sentiments which prompt to them, that they hold their high place in existence,—and are connected, by a peculiarly intimate relation,—with the fountain of being,—and with all the higher and more spiritual orders of his creatures.

CONSIDERATIONS SHOWING THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR RELIGIOUS FEELINGS IN THE ECONOMY OF PROVIDENCE.

From the observations adduced in the preceding sections, it appears that our religious sentiments and

feelings occupy the highest place in the structure of our nature,—and that man never acts conformably to his *whole nature*, but when these sentiments and feelings are permitted to mingle with all his other active powers,—and give to all his habits and pursuits their predominant character and direction.

From the important place which our religious dispositions thus occupy in the general scheme of our nature, it was to be expected that a corresponding importance should have been attached by Divine Providence to the right ordering of these dispositions;—and we, accordingly, find the high estimation in which the religious nature and duties of man are held by God, very distinctly pointed out by the following considerations.

That, in the first place, God has always represented himself as "jealous of his glory;"—or determined to claim for himself the purest offerings of the piety and homage of mankind. It cannot be necessary to state, that the idea of God being "jealous," in the strict acceptation of that term, is not warranted by any conceptions we can form of his character or principles of conduct;—and the only meaning of the expression,—which is so often used in the sacred writings, and is so expressive in itself,—

must be, that from the pre-eminent importance which the Deity attaches to the religious feelings and character of human nature, he is determined to mark his displeasure at every attempt that may be made either to pervert these principles, or to treat them with contempt or disregard;—that he wishes men, throughout all their varieties, ever to consider themselves as religious beings, and as capable, by means of their religious powers and services, of holding direct intercourse with him;—that all acts of piety ought, consequently, to be most reverentially performed,—and all the services by which religious feelings are expressed, to be most strictly guarded;—and, generally, that men should feel,—and act habitually upon the feeling,—that their proudest honour and best privilege lies in having been so constituted as to be capable of recognizing their alliance to God,—of performing solemn services directly dedicated to his honour,—and of holding, by means of these, constant intercourse and communion with him.

And, accordingly, it deserves to be remarked, in the second place, that the importance attached by the Deity, to the religious sentiments and services of men, has been unequivocally marked by his hav-

ing made it the leading object of all his dispensations to purify and improve their religious views and feelings. It was for this purpose that, at an early period of the history of mankind, he selected "one family" to be the depositaries of his worship, and the guardians of his promises;—that afterwards he instituted, by his own authority, a system of "ordinances and laws," which were intended to separate "the peculiar people" from all other nations,—and to preserve the doctrine of his Unity,—and of his righteous government, amidst all the superstitions and errors of the world at that period;—and, lastly, that, by means of the Founder of our faith, he instituted a pure, and simple, and liberal system of doctrine and worship, suited to the progressive character of human society,—and capable of undergoing corresponding adaptations as human knowledge becomes extended,—and the sentiments and feelings of men are refined and enlarged.

And the events of Providence, in the general arrangements of human society, have, in fact, since the time when this pure and simple system was first established by its Author,—been so guided as to have had a progressive influence in giving greater perfection and consistency to the religious views and prac-

tices of men;—so that, upon reviewing the grand operations of Providence, in the past history of our race, it is impossible not to perceive that his dispensations have had it as their progressive purpose gradually to improve the religious feelings and practices of men, and by this means at once to better the entire structure of human nature,—and to bind men, more directly and firmly, by means of their improved forms of worship and modes of feeling,—to himself, the Fountain of all Good.

In the third place, the importance attached to our religious feelings and services is distinctly marked by the fact, so often already stated, that it has pleased the Author of existence to give to these feelings a pre-eminent place in the general structure of human nature,—insomuch, that it is as a religious being that man is obviously distinguished from all the other creatures that inhabit this world,—and that it is in the performance of the services which his religious nature prompts, that he at once assumes his most august character, and feels most intensely his relation to all the higher and more spiritual orders of the creatures of God.

Accordingly, all nations have had an intimate feeling of this supremacy of our religious sentiments

and practices,—and have testified their indelible sense of this supremacy, by the care with which they have addressed themselves to religious rites,—and by the imposing forms which they have ever been most anxious to give to their devotional services. In this, as in every thing else, the native sentiments of the multitude of mankind afford a far better intimation of what is right and accordant with the intentions of Providence, than the partial speculations into which men are so apt to run, under the influence of intellectual vanity,—or the degrading operation of worldly anxieties.

EXCELLENT EFFECTS WHICH OUR RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS, WHEN UNDER DUE CULTIVATION, ARE ADAPTED TO PRODUCE ON THE OTHER PARTS OF OUR NATURE.

Hitherto we have chiefly been employed in combating the idea that religious services can only be defended on the ground of the good effects which they are calculated to produce on the other more active portions of our feelings or conduct,—and in evincing that they are to be considered as *becoming* and *direct expressions* of feelings that are essential

to human nature, and pre-eminently characteristic of it,—feelings that chiefly give to man his place amidst the grandeur of the Creator's dominions,—and by means of which he is prompted and fitted for holding communion with God,—which is, unquestionably, the chief privilege and honour of his condition.

And, as a consequence of these views, we have farther argued, that God has evinced the importance which he attaches to the religious services and views of men,—by having represented himself as "jealous of his glory,"—by having made it the grand object of all his more remarkable dispensations to purify the religious services of mankind,—and by having given to our religious feelings a pre-eminent place in the general structure of our nature.

It is proper, however, now to remark, that the *effects actually produced* by the religious views and feelings of men are of the most valuable kind.

For, in the first place, our religious sentiments are the source of some of the purest and most elevating feelings that belong to our nature;—it is in the indulgence of them, that hopes and joys of the most exalted kind take possession of the heart;—and the very consciousness which these feelings and exercises give, that we are in direct intercourse

with God,—that we are under his protection,—and enjoying "the smile of his countenance," cannot but afford to every human heart that indulges it, a feeling of complacency and of pure enjoyment, with which there is no other feeling of human nature that deserves to be compared.

In the second place, our religious feelings are fitted to have a refining and elevating influence on all our other principles and sentiments;—they are the guiding principles of our nature;—those which are intended to take the lead in our feelings,—and to give to them their character and direction;—and they have accordingly been gifted, by the Author of nature, with a dignity and grandeur corresponding to the place they are intended to occupy. We accordingly observe, that, in actual life, they have this effect upon the other feelings of men,—and that, provided they are not themselves distorted by perverted views, their tendency is to elevate,—and sweeten,—and give composure to the whole aspect of human character.

In the last place, and as a consequence of all this,—our religious feelings have been made conducive to the right fulfilment of all the other duties that are presented to us in life,—insomuch, that it is im-

possible to conceive a man to be actuated by just and becoming sentiments of religion, without being disposed, at the same time, to fulfil with tenderness and punctuality all the offices of his station in life,—and to show gentleness and good conscience in every trust and in every relation in which he can be placed.

And thus has the Author of our being, by having given this refining influence to our religious principles and services, bound together, in a most beautiful manner, and by an effort of that wisdom which is indeed Divine, our duty to himself, which these exercises more especially aim at fulfilling,—with the duty which we owe to all the other beings with whom we are connected as inhabitants of this world.

Taking, then, the whole of the preceding reasonings together, we are now in a condition to state what is the nature and degree of the guilt which attaches to those who either carelessly neglect, or daringly pour contempt on religious exercises.

It deserves to be stated, that the charge is of far more extensive application, than, before experience, we should have been disposed to anticipate;—for there are at all times a vast multitude of men who,

being involved in the business and anxieties of life, are apt to have the purer and nobler feelings of their nature either suppressed in their operation, or apparently almost extinguished by the unpropitious circumstances amidst which they are placed;—and who, consequently, are easily led into the belief, that, provided they act conscientiously in their ordinary transactions, they are in reality doing everything, for the right performance of which religious services can be of any avail;—that they are, therefore, not guilty, of any great neglect in overlooking these services, or in ceasing to cultivate the feelings from which they spring;—and that, in short, they may safely leave such exercises to those who feel a greater propensity to indulge in them, or who are more under the influence of, what they regard as, the weak and superstitious fears in which they originate. They insist that they do their duty in life as well as those who profess the most sacred reverence for religious services;—and it will not, they imagine, be at last taken into account whether they have done that duty from a religious spirit, or from other principles which to them seemed more natural, —and which, in their case, produced the desired result with equal consistency and effect.

Now this is so common a mode of arguing and acting among "men of the world," that the answer which we have to make to it, and which is merely a recapitulation of the principles explained in the preceding sections,—deserves to be stated in the most decisive and peremptory terms.

What we say, then, of those who argue and act in this manner is,—

In the first place, that they do not act conformably to their *whole* nature,—for they are essentially religious beings,—and their religious feelings were evidently intended to have an influence on all the other parts of their nature.

In the second place, they do not act suitably to the *highest* and most *characteristic* part of their nature;—for it is as a religious being that man holds his pre-eminent place in life,—and is encircled with a "dignity and honour" which belong not to any other creature with whom he is associated.

In the third place, they show themselves insensible of the noblest *privilege* and *honour* that belongs to their condition,—that of being permitted, by means of religious services, to hold intercourse with the Fountain of all good.

In the fourth place, they deny themselves some

of the *purest* and *noblest pleasures* which belong to their nature,—those, namely, which result from the indulgence of the religious affections,—and from the sublime and composing influences of a spirit of piety.

In the fifth place, they are not availing themselves of all the *helps* that have been furnished them for the due fulfilment of all their duties in life;—and conscious as every man must be of his constant liability to fail in his trust,—it is inexcusable temerity and folly in any man to refuse to adopt principles, and to avail himself of services, which have so obvious a tendency to give stability and dignity to every other exertion which, in the discharge of the active and social duties of his condition, he may be called to make.

In one word, those who fail duly to prize and to support such services are *not pious men*;—and the want of *piety* in any character has always been considered as one of the greatest defects to which a man can be subject;—while, on the other hand, the feelings and services which bind us to God and to things unseen and eternal, are universally felt to be the highest and most honourable which belong to our nature, and the most worthy, therefore, of be-

ing cultivated with all the care, and guarded by all the expressions of reverence and esteem, which we are capable of employing.

MISTAKEN NOTIONS OF DEVOUT MEN RESPECTING THE TRUE NATURE AND VALUE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

After having exposed the mistakes of that great multitude, who, being much occupied with the active duties of life, are apt to imagine that religious services are not demanded of them, or have no meaning or propriety beyond their tendency to promote the more effectual discharge of ordinary duties, —we have now to correct the opposite error of those who, being addicted constitutionally or by habit to religious services, are disposed to think that these are the only services by which we can recommend ourselves to the approbation of God,—or, in strict propriety of speech, are the only services which are entitled to be denominated the service of God.

In what sense they are properly the "service of God" has already been explained,—namely,—in so far as they are *direct* expressions of our religious feelings, and are offered to God without any im-

mediate reference to their good effects in the conduct of life. On this account,—and to distinguish them from those duties which relate more immediately to the affairs of life,—they have been called *Divine services*;—but when, from this appellation, we conclude, that they are the only or the most important part of the service which man owes to his Creator, we are permitting our imaginations to be deluded by one of those vague or indistinct analogies by means of which human language so often becomes a source of error and perplexity.

The grand illusions which lead to this mistake on the part of devout men,—are the following:—

In the first place, there is a habit of thought extremely prevalent among men,—that all the ordinary duties of life are properly classed as profane,—while those only which are offered directly to God are entitled to be considered as divine or holy services. From this distinction between these two classes of duties,—by means of which they seem to be essentially separated from each other,—it happens, that those who are devoted to religious feelings and services are extremely apt to conclude, that ordinary duties and social avocations, instead of being any part of the service which we owe to God,

are, in truth, but interruptions to that entire devotion of ourselves to his service to which we feel that we are bound,—and are hence rather to be viewed as melancholy, though indispensable appendages of our condition,—which, as servants of God, we have reason to regret, and which mark only the degraded state in which existence is at present assigned us,—than as capable of being raised into that true service which, as subjects of the Divine kingdom, we are required to pay to its Sovereign.

Every person who has carefully observed the feelings and habitual views of that class of men who are emphatically denominated "serious or religious men," must have perceived the existence of this fallacy in their minds;—and it has, accordingly, been one grand object of the Author of this work to show, in what a different and nobler light the ordinary duties and common avocations of life are entitled to be considered,—they being the true field of duty pointed out to man,—and constituting, when performed in a religious spirit,—that is to say, under an impression that they are the very duties by an exact fulfilment of which we prove our obedience to God,—the true object proposed to us as subjects of that empire, by the progress of which

Divine Wisdom is carrying forward the interests of all the portions of his dominions.

Indeed, whenever this mistake on the part of religious men is corrected,—that is to say, whenever they are made to perceive that there is a character of sacredness capable of being communicated even to the ordinary duties of life,—their exclusive assignation of this character, to what are strictly termed Divine services, must vanish,—and a new and more comprehensive character be given to all their notions of the real duty assigned them in life.

There is, however, another source of this mistake on the part of religiously-disposed men. Our ideas of God, it has already been remarked, are necessarily derived from impressions connected with what is great or influential in the characters and offices of our fellow-men;—and it hence happens, that as an earthly sovereign,—or master,—or parent is sometimes gratified by expressions of reverence or affection, which are not substantiated by corresponding acts in the habitual conduct of those who use these expressions,—we are apt to suppose, that the Supreme Parent,—or Master,—or Sovereign,—may, in like manner, be approached by tokens of homage which he will consider as a fulfilment

of the duty to which he is exclusively entitled,—whatever may become of that discharge of active duty which, from the error formerly noticed, we consider him as disposed to regard as but a profane service,—with which the duty appropriated to himself has no essential relation.

At the same time, it is evident, that the true duty which is to be paid, even to an earthly sovereign,—or master,—or parent, is the conscientious fulfilment of the services which are assigned to those who hold, with respect to them, the characters of subjects,—or servants,—or sons;—and that if, on any occasion, our earthly superiors are gratified by expressions of esteem which do not issue in such active testimonies of loyalty,—it is only either because, from their shortsightedness, they mistake the true purpose and character of those who so flatter them, or because, from their innate selfishness or vanity, they are pleased with appearances of respect which, if they possessed more firmness of character, would be considered by them as of no real value, or perhaps as an abomination.

In the last place, there is one expression of devout feeling which is peculiarly apt to lead to the mistake we are at present endeavouring to correct,

—namely,—the contrition which we exhibit before God for the many failures by which our conduct is marked;—and from the ambiguous character of which we are apt to suppose, that the mere expression of sorrow will be accepted as a substitute for the real feeling, of which that expression should be the token,—or for that active endeavour to repair our offences, to which both the expression and the feeling of sorrow ought to be preparatory.

These seem to be the fallacies which so often lead devoutly-disposed men to suppose, that religious services, strictly so called, are the only services by which we can approve ourselves to God,—and that all the common occupations of life, however necessary, from the unfortunate circumstances in which we are placed in this world, are but sad interruptions to our real duty,—avocations that lead away the heart from its true object,—profane and unprofitable services to man considered as a religious and immortal being,—and only to be viewed with regret, as things that are constantly intruding into that place which should be solely occupied by devotional feelings, or by aspirations of the heart and imagination that should lead us above the sphere of all earthly objects.

In truth, there is no more fatal or generally prevalent error than that which respects this separation between Divine services, and those which we consider as profane, or as having no relation to the duty which we owe to God ;—and it is a conviction of the unwarranted nature of this distinction, and of its most pernicious effect both upon the religious apprehensions and on the active conduct of men,—that has induced the Author so earnestly and repeatedly to urge, throughout this work, that the true object proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God, is the fulfilment of the duties of that station in life which we feel ourselves individually to hold ;—and that when this fufilment of our active, and social, and professional duties is done under a sense of our responsibility to God,—it in truth assumes a religious character,—and the most familiar duties of life become testimonies of our loyalty to our Supreme and Heavenly Sovereign.

And that the active and ordinary duties of life are entitled, from their importance, to the character we have thus claimed for them, is evident from the following considerations :—

In the first place, that while religious services are only required to be paid *occasionally* by man, his ac-

tive and social duties are those which form his constant and daily employment,—and that, consequently, they are the only duties by which he can *at all times* act as a servant of God, or make the whole of life a "sacrifice which may be well pleasing in his sight."

Indeed we may be certain, that when God so ordered the lot of life to every man, as to make the discharge of active and social duties, of necessity, the most constant employment of his earthly existence, he intended to signify, that it was by the due discharge of these that he was chiefly to show his fidelity to God, or that they constitute that constant duty which the Father of his spirit requires him to perform.

And, in the second place, the supreme importance of these active duties, is still farther made evident by the consideration, that it is by means of them, and not by religious services, that we act as "fellow-workers with God" in the promotion of his designs, or are permitted to have an effectual influence in carrying forward that vast scheme of government which, by means of the united co-operation of the active energies of all the myriads of his creatures, God is constantly superintending for the pro-

gressive welfare of his dominions. Religious services are most becoming testimonies of our high and religious nature,—and may prepare us for a more effectual discharge of active duties,—but it is by the actual fulfilment of these duties that we become influential servants of our Supreme Lord,—and are permitted to have the high honour of co-operating with him for the eventual prosperity of his kingdom.

In the third place, the importance of our common and active duties is made evident by the consideration, that our religious services are in some of their parts so constructed as to suggest that they have a reference to a better discharge of common avocations.

Thus what propriety is there in begging "assistance of God" for the discharge of the duties of life,—and every prayer must be supposed more or less to include such petitions,—unless we are to show that such assistance has been bestowed by the manner in which we devote ourselves, amidst active duties, to the labours of our lot?

Or what propriety is there in solemnly asking "forgiveness" of God, if it be not understood, that, in expressing that wish, we also signify our intention

that, as we have done iniquity, we shall, in so far as strength is given us for the fulfilment of our intention, do so no more?

So that by far the greater number of the petitions and confessions which enter into our acts of devotion imply, that we are only begging for assistance or forgiveness which are to be manifested by us after our religious services have ceased,—and amidst the severe labours or dangerous temptations which make up the true field of our obedience to God.

There is a beautiful and most instructive accordance between the views we have now been recommending, and those which the Founder of the Christian faith was in the habit of exhibiting. Indeed one of the very first aspects which his history offers to our notice, is that of his being a teacher who sought to substitute, for the superstitious follies of the age in which he lived, the performance, amidst severe and active duties, of that true and living service which God requires of man;—and many of his more particular sayings bear evidence to the impression which he had of the true nature of the relation

which subsists between religious services, strictly so called, and the more active duties of common life.

Thus, in order to correct the superstitious opinions of his hearers respecting the observance of the Sabbath,—he gives the universal precept,—that in all circumstances "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day."

He also declared, when enforcing the obligation of those duties which are demanded of us by the social charities of life,—that even a gift meant to be presented as an offering on "the altar of God" must be withheld from that service, if the necessity "of a parent" requires that the offering should first be devoted to his use.

More generally, he declared that "God loveth mercy rather than sacrifice,"—and that those are an abomination in his sight who devote themselves to the exact fulfilment of mere matters of form,—whether relating to the service due to God or man,—but who neglect the "weightier matters of the law,—justice,—mercy,—and faith."

And,—in one word,—though we find him duly attentive to all religious acts,—such as prayer and frequenting the synagogue on the Sabbath-day,—and devoutly appearing in Jerusalem on the yearly

return of the Paschal solemnity,—yet the strain of his history rather represents him as a person who considered himself, even in the most ordinary avocations of life, as "doing the will of his Heavenly Father,"—and who thus made his whole course on earth,—even when that course exposed him to the severest privations, and the most humiliating persecutions, and when, at last, it led him to the horrors of a shameful and "accursed death,"—"a sacrifice and an offering of a sweet-smelling savour in the sight of God."

All this is what we should have expected of One, who looked upon the whole face of Nature as the dominion or kingdom of God;—who saw, consequently, in the varied labours and cares of men, the trust committed to them for the trial of their loyalty, as subjects of that kingdom;—and who wished to consecrate all their employments, by leading them to fulfil them as the task assigned them by their Supreme Lord,—and as means, by the due management of which they become active co-operators with him in the promotion of his plans.

The conclusions, then, which we seem entitled to draw from all that has been said, are the following:—

That religious services are the service due to God, —not because they are exclusively entitled to this character,—but simply because, being *direct* expressions of our religious feelings, they are offered as a testimony of our devotion to God,—without any immediate or direct reference to the uses of common life.

That so far, indeed, are religious services, strictly so called, from being the sole or the most important duty prescribed to man,—that it is to the daily and constantly-recurring duties of his place, as an active and social being, that this title is more appropriately assigned;—because it is in these that the chief part of his existence must be occupied,—and it is by these only that he can become an active co-operator with God in the promotion of his designs,—and can render his whole course of life "a sacrifice which may be well pleasing in the sight of God."

That, consequently, religious services ought not to interfere with the fulfilment of active and social duties of a pressing and important kind,—but that we should rather accustom ourselves to believe, —that if we are called, by necessity or mercy, to the aid of our fellow-creatures,—or to any service by which an amount of active good may be done, which,

however, must be left undone, if we persist in the performance of some service which aims only at the expression of our devotional feelings,—we must consider our active duties as our first obligation,—and be satisfied, that, with the conscientious fulfilment of these, God is better pleased than by any testimonies of our merely devotional reverence, which are directly offered to himself.

That still farther, devotional duties ought on no account to be viewed as compensating for failures in active duty, when it is in our power to prevent or to remedy such failures;—and

That we should endeavour to carry the spirit inspired by religious services into all the details of common life;—that is to say, that when we ask "assistance" of God in our prayers, we should, having so asked, put forth our own strength in the discharge of those duties, for the fulfilment of which we have asked and expect that assistance;—and that, when we have begged "forgiveness," we should, having risen from our devotions, address ourselves to the duties of our condition with a firm resolution to resist those seductions, for the forgiveness of whose previous influence over us we have asked the pardoning mercy of God.

And thus should the whole of life be conformed by us to the spirit in which we approach "the Throne of Grace,"—and all its duties made to correspond with the hope, which, before God, we have expressed of his forgiving mercy and assisting grace.

This is that true offering of our whole course of existence which God requires of us,—and this is the notion of "the service which we owe to God" most impressively given by the discourses and example of the Founder of Christianity,—who considered himself,—in labour, and in sorrow,—in humiliation, and contempt,—during long years of unfavoured beneficence,—and at last, amidst the agonies of death,—as "doing the will of the Father who had sent him," and offering, by his course of patient well-doing, an instructive lesson to all after times of that true service, with which only,—being offered by a being who has been placed amidst a constant succession of labours and of sorrows,—the Disposer of all lots is well pleased.

FURTHER DIRECTIONS OF THE AUTHOR OF CHRISTIANITY RESPECTING THE BEST MODE OF PERFORMING RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

It was to have been expected, that a Teacher, commissioned by God to reform the notions and characters of men, would have especially applied himself to the correction of their ideas respecting religious services;—because, during all the earlier ages of the world,—and over the entire face of the habitable earth,—this department of the duty required of man had degenerated into many fantastic forms,—and was far indeed from being in that state in which it was desirable for the best interests of human nature that it should exist,—or consistent, indeed, with the high and rational nature by which man is distinguished; and it is, accordingly, instructive to observe how admirably suited were the discourses of our Lord, in so far as they related to this particular subject, to the exigencies of the world at the time of his coming,—and how beautifully they are fitted for improving the religious services of mankind, even during the most enlightened ages that are ever to revolve.

Thus, our Saviour not only stated, in a most in-

structive and interesting manner, the relation of religious services to the other duties required of men, —but he has, also, in many passages recorded by the Evangelists, pointed out the true spirit in which these services may be most acceptably paid.

There are two errors, especially, into which men have, in all ages, been disposed to fall, with respect to such services;—and both of which have been corrected with great beauty and simplicity of illustration, by our Lord, in that fine discourse with which he opened his ministry,—and more particularly in that part of it in which he has given directions respecting "prayer,—fasting,—and almsgiving."

In the first place,—men have always been disposed to make their religious services subservient to the nourishment of their feelings of vanity,—and, while they are in communion with God only,—to conceive themselves as witnessed also by their fellow-men,—and as performing a duty for which human approbation is the appropriate recompense.

And, in the second place, there seems to be a natural delusion of the human heart, which induces men to think,—that their religious services will be acceptable to God, not simply on account of the sincerity or purity of intention from which they

proceed,—but on account of the time which they devote to the performance of these duties,—or the "multitude of words" in which their obedience is expressed.

And, lastly, men have always been too apt to consider themselves, while engaged in the performance of services so peculiarly high and honourable,—as more immediately objects of the favour of God than other men, who may not at the same moment be engaged in the same duties,—and thus at once to form too high an opinion of their own merits,—and too low an estimate of the characters and pursuits of their fellow-men.

Now, with the view of correcting the two former of these errors, how beautiful are the directions given by our Lord, when he thus discoursed respecting the duties of prayer,—fasting,—and almsgiving!

"When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall

reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him."

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

And "when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

And how finely are the self-conceited feelings of the human heart, in the performance of religious services, rebuked by our Lord, in the interesting parable of the Pharisee and the Publican! For

"he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray, —the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,—God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. But the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The singular beauty and appropriateness of these discourses of our Lord cannot be overlooked,—inculcating, as they do, a spirit not only of humility and of sincerity in our religious services,—but a spirit also of pure and heartfelt joy. We shall have occasion to illustrate this last observation more fully in a subsequent paragraph.

ON THE FORMS MOST SUITABLE TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

Hitherto we have spoken chiefly of the relation of services strictly religious to those other duties which belong to man as a subject of the kingdom of God,—and of the *spirit* in which the Founder of Christianity has enjoined that these services should be performed. We have now to add an observation respecting the *forms* best suited to religious duties.

In looking back upon the religious services of mankind from the earliest ages,—the fact is obvious, that during the previous periods of human history, these services have chiefly been performed by the observance of ceremonial and emblematic rites,—and among all rude nations, even of the present times, the same general form continues to characterize their devotional duties.

It was thus that among the primitive fathers of our race their acts of religious homage were chiefly performed by the consecration of a grove,—the building of an altar,—the celebration of a mystic festivity,—or the devoting of some much-valued object to the Deity whom they revered. This also continued to be the general character of the religious

worship prescribed to the Jews by Divine authority; —and over all the kingdoms of the Gentile world a magnificent system of ceremonies was appointed, the effect of which was rather to awaken the imaginations and feelings of men,—than to enlighten their understandings or to extend their views of the grand arrangements of the Divine kingdom.

This great system of ceremonies continued during many ages to associate itself even with the simple doctrines and pure views of the Christian institution; —and over a considerable part of Christendom this union may still be traced, and the ceremonies of ancient Rome, transferred from their primitive uses,—continue to give a motley character to the spiritual services of the Christian church.

In a few churches, however, this union has been destroyed. But instead of it there has been substituted the abstract dogmas and technical distinctions, which, at the Reformation, were in universal use throughout the schools of Christian Europe. Hence the services of some of these churches, having laid aside all the *ceremonial* character which in former times had gained such universal ascendency, have become remarkable for the baldness and tameness of their devotional rites,—and men seek rather to

model their understandings to certain abstract modes of thought, than to awaken or elevate their devotional feelings, when they frequent the places of public worship.

It ought, however, to be kept in mind, that it is chiefly as a *sentimental* being that man is fitted for the exercises of religion,—and that hence any form of worship which has no tendency to awaken his imagination or to expand his feelings, is defective in the very purpose for which all devotional exercises have been established.

There can be no doubt, at the same time, that the ceremonies of former ages were either cumbersome by their multiplicity,—or offensive to good taste by their absurd or fantastic character;—and the most perfect form of religious service would be that which, while it tended to expand the views and to enlighten the intellects of the devout, should at the same time be chiefly productive of those pure and delightful feelings, by which the heart,—and sentiments,—and imaginations of men,—are raised above all low objects, to the enjoyment of those divine and satisfying emotions which constitute by far the highest prerogative of the human soul.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the intellec-

tual grandeur of man consists chiefly in the power of drawing consequences from principles, or rather of merely tracing, by the instrumentality of abstract terms, its own general conceptions to certain modes of thought that may at any time be accordant with its speculative views. It is, on the contrary, in the *imagination* and *heart* of man,—in his capacity of being affected by elevated feelings,—and forming conceptions that ally him with every thing that is grand and enduring in the universe,—that his true excellence as an intellectual being consists;—and the *devotional feelings* of the human soul being a portion of its most exalted sentiments, ought, therefore, to be expressed by forms which have in them something of this imaginative or sentimental cast.

At the same time, there is little reason to expect that the religious services of men will ever attain to their most perfect form;—and devout minds must therefore, in every case, avail themselves of those services which they find in use,—and must only seek to use these as means for the excitement and purification of those feelings, of which such services are the appropriate expression,—and for their reaction on which they are chiefly valuable.

The religious forms, however, that prevail in

any age,—or among any people, have a wonderful influence, not merely on the devotional feelings,—but on the entire characters of those who use them. It is hence that it has been the object of the Deity, in his successive interpositions for the regeneration of mankind, chiefly to improve their religious services;—and it is hence, also, that it is so true a source of thankfulness to any people, to live in an age, or country, in which a simple and interesting form of religious worship has been established;—because such a form will always be the most efficacious, not only in purifying the devotional feelings,—but in bettering the whole characters of men,—and especially in giving a joyous and delightful cast to all the tendencies and sentiments of their hearts.

IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMING RELIGIOUS SERVICES NOT FROM FEAR,—BUT FROM LOVE.

In general, it cannot be said that the religious services of mankind proceed from love. It is true that they have deep reverence for the power, and great fear for the wrath of God,—and, taking mankind generally, it is impossible to deny, that their

sense of the obligation of religious services seems to be one of the most characteristic and influential of all their feelings. It is hence that we find no nation or age in which religious forms of one kind or other have not been common,—and that there are no usages which are guarded with so strict a care, or an interference with which touches so deeply the passions of men,—as those which have been consecrated in their imaginations by their connexion with religious sentiments.

Still it is rather fear than love that seems, in most instances, to be the animating feeling of the devout; —and it is hence that the Apostle has finely said, when speaking of the spirit which Christianity is fitted to inspire, that God hath given to its true disciples "not the spirit of bondage but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father."

That is to say,—there are three states of mind in which man seems to exist without respect to God.

There are, in the first place, men to whom the thought of God is positively unpleasant,—or to whom the most gratifying of all thoughts would be, that the very idea of a Deity was but the offspring of the vain fears or superstitions of men. They,

accordingly, are characterized in Scripture as being "*enemies* to God in their hearts,"—and their religious nature is represented as existing in a state of complete and melancholy perversion.

There are other men,—who, though they do not hate God,—yet chiefly look up to him as "a hard Master," to whose service they are bound,—but who exacts from them duties which they have little inclination to fulfil,—and to whom they devote themselves chiefly because they acknowledge his authority, or are afraid of his displeasure. These, again, are they who in Scripture are characterized as having, with respect to God, the dispositions of "*bondmen* or *slaves*,"—and, perhaps, their characteristic state of feeling is that which of all others is most common among the children of men.

There are others who, in the language of Scripture, are said to have received the "spirit of adoption;"—they feel themselves to stand to God in the relation of children to a kind and indulgent parent;—they are convinced that even the severer parts of the appointments of Providence are pervaded by a good and gracious design;—and have no doubt that if they could extend their view sufficiently far into all the consequences of things, they would perceive

that they could have wished nothing better for themselves than those very hardships and severe distresses, which have sometimes seemed to render their lot in life so peculiarly trying.

In a word, it is the disposition of such minds to perceive only "goodness and tender mercy" pervading all the ways and works of God;—and, rejoicing in having been called into existence under the sway of so good and perfect a Sovereign, they advance to all the services of piety with hearts full of love to the Source of all Goodness,—and have sincere delight in offering unto God the testimony of their filial confidence and affection.

In order that this spirit may pervade any mind, —it must have gained the habit of viewing all the *works and ways of God as manifestations of his paternal character*;—and, looking beyond the present condition of man to his future and eternal destiny, it must have become satisfied that everlasting ages will only more fully evolve the beneficent plans of Divine love for the perfection of the universe.

In order to give this beautiful character to the religious services of mankind generally, many ages must yet revolve, during which light shall be gra-

dually extended,—and a vast host of errors and prejudices be dispelled from the minds and imaginations of men. But, in the mean time, every individual may be satisfied that the more of this spirit he can infuse into his own religious services, the more nearly will they approach to the most perfect form in which they can be paid,—the purer will be his own satisfaction in the performance of such exercises,—and the better and more lasting will be their influence on the whole tenor of his character and conduct.

There can be no doubt that the ministrations of religion can be made to assume a far more captivating aspect than, in the public services of the sanctuary, they are commonly made to exhibit;—and there is as little reason for questioning the soundness of the assertion,—that if religion were made thus generally an object of love,—a far better effect would probably be produced even on the minds of those who are most prone to go astray,—and in whom religious feelings in any shape are not at present the prevailing sentiments. Men will, in all cases, give a more ready service where they love than where they fear;—and in proportion as the former principle is the motive of their obedience,

they approach more nearly to the condition of those angels of God, of whom it is emphatically said in Scripture that they "delight to do his will."

RECAPITULATION OF THE VIEWS EXHIBITED IN THE PRECEDING PARTS OF THE WORK.

The first part of this Work was intended to exhibit a different view of the *kingdom of God*, as established upon earth, from that which is generally taken by writers on this and on kindred subjects.

According to the Author's idea of the meaning of that phrase, it refers not merely to the religious dispensations of Providence,—but to *all the means* by which the Supreme Governor is carrying forward the interests of that portion of his universal dominions with which we are connected;—and thus we are led to see the propriety of the terms used by our Lord, when, during his personal ministry, he spoke of the kingdom of God as about to come,—that is to say,—when he represented himself as the herald of an era, during the progress of which not only all nations were to be taken into the household of God, —but all the various lots and occupations of men

were to be consecrated by the new views which his doctrine should disclose,—and this earth would assume to the religious nature of men the aspect of but one portion of that universal kingdom which God is exercising over all worlds,—a portion of that empire, consequently, in which man himself becomes "a subject of the kingdom of God,"—and all his varied tasks and occupations are viewed as conspiring together, under the superintendence of Divine Providence, for the evolution of the ulterior purposes which the Almighty has in view.

This view of the kingdom of God, and of the means by which its progress is advanced, seemed to lead directly to the conclusion which we have endeavoured to establish in the second part of the Work, namely,—that the object proposed to man as a subject of the kingdom of God, consists, not, as is commonly stated, in vague aspirations after perfection,—but in a zealous and successful fulfilment of the various duties assigned him by that definite station which he occupies in life;—it being understood,—that these duties are fulfilled, in obedience to the appointment of God,—or under the view of their being "a trust" given us in the present life, by our successful discharge of which we

are to prove our worthiness of a greater and more permanent trust in some future stage of our existence.

It is to be remarked, accordingly, that this view of the object proposed to man is not liable to the objection that it offers too low and vulgar an object to his pursuit;—but, on the contrary, that its effect is to elevate even the most common duties,—by representing them all as invested with a religious character,—or as parts of that great trust, by a due discharge of which we show our fidelity as subjects of the Divine kingdom.

And thus an objection which has often been made to our common modes of treating this subject is completely done away,—namely,—that we set too much value on the cultivation merely of abstract feeling, —and too little on the active discharge of the substantial duties of our condition,—and are thus led into many fantastic views of human obligation,—and leave out of our consideration many virtues which the common sense of mankind, in all ages, has taught them to consider as of the utmost moment to the happiness and good order of life.

Indeed, every person must perceive, that the view of human duty presented to his mind by these

considerations, is not only very different from that commonly given,—but far more simple,—satisfactory,—and comprehensive;—and, indeed, that the whole order of life becomes invested with a new and higher character when our active and social duties are thus raised to their due rank in our estimation.

It is implied in all this, however, that man is *essentially a religious being*,—that is to say, not merely a being who is capable of occasionally feeling religious sentiments,—and performing religious services,—but in whom his religious feelings form the highest,—and most characteristic parts of his nature;—who, accordingly, ought to have all the other feelings of his nature modified and governed by these,—and who never appears in his perfect and true character but when, by means of these religious tendencies of his nature, all his duties become invested, in his estimation, with a sacred character,—and he himself assumes the attitude, not merely of a laborious aspirant after temporal good,—but of a subject of the boundless and eternal kingdom of God,—who, amidst the passing but influential interests of the present life, is proving his title to a greater trust, when the magnificent ar-

rangements of the Divine kingdom shall be more gloriously and extensively manifested.

Being thus, however, essentially a religious being,—it is proper and becoming that man should perform some services *directly expressive* of these his religious feelings,—and of the connexion in which they place him with the Supreme Sovereign of Nature. All nations, accordingly, have shown their disposition to perform such services,—and these are what are strictly and appropriately called *religious or Divine services.*

In proceeding to inquire into the nature and obligation of these, we have, accordingly, been led to state the following propositions:—

In the first place,—that these religious services are not merely obligatory from the *good effects* which they are fitted to produce on the conduct of man,—but from their character as *direct* expressions of those feelings of human nature, by means of which man holds his pre-eminent place in life,—is capable of considering the universe as a "grand temple," of which he has been made the priest,—and attains the high privilege and honour of holding intercourse with the Supreme Object of religious homage.

In the second place,—that those who neglect religious services act unsuitably to the high nature which they possess,—deny themselves some of the purest pleasures of their nature,—and reject by far the highest privilege and honour which their Creator has conferred on them.

In the third place,—that religious men are sometimes disposed to commit an opposite error,—by considering religious duties as the only true service which we owe to God;—whereas, active and social duties claim this distinction on more extensive grounds,—being the only services by means of which the whole of life can be made a "sacrifice in the sight of God,"—the only services by which we *co-operate* with God in carrying on his progressive designs,—and the due performance of which is implied in almost all the religious duties which we can be supposed to perform.

In the fourth place,—that services strictly religious ought never to interfere with the discharge of active and pressing duties;—that, indeed, they ought rather to be viewed as *privileges* than simply as services, which we are bound by the command of a superior to fulfil;—and that they should never be separated in our estimation from that zealous per-

formance of all ordinary obligations, without the corresponding discharge of which they can only be a deceiving of our own souls.

In the fifth place,—that the Founder of our faith has set the relative importance of these two orders of duties in a very distinct and interesting light,—and has also, throughout his whole discourses,—pointed out, with much beauty, the spirit in which our religious services, in particular, ought to be performed.

In the sixth place,—that religious services, being properly expressions of certain high sentiments or feelings of human nature,—the form best suited to them is that which, while it serves to expand and elevate our views of religious truth, is also best adapted to impress the imagination,—and to touch and purify the heart.

And, in the last place,—that religious services being a high honour and privilege to which we are admitted, and for the enjoyment of which we are qualified by the characteristic grandeur of our religious nature, ought to be performed, not so much in a spirit of fear as of love;—for "God loveth a cheerful giver,"—and all the doctrines of Christianity, when properly understood,—are adapted to beget in us the temper, "not of bondmen, but of

sons;"—so that we are enabled, in all our services, "to cry Abba, Father."

The attentive reader, it is presumed, will perceive, that the preceding train of observations leads to views of duty,—and to an estimate of the relative importance of duties very different from those commonly given,—but also more simple,—more practical,—more comprehensive,—and more satisfactory,—fitted to remove many objections and perplexities which are constantly crossing the minds of those who are in the habit either of privately meditating on these most important of all subjects,—or of discoursing on them to others;—and thus pre-eminently adapted to render the business of public instruction more effectual,—as well as to render devout meditation more satisfactory to all orders of men.

The Author shall now, therefore, proceed, without farther recapitulation, to the third part of the

Work,—in which he intends to treat of the *manner* in which the object proposed to man, as a subject of the Divine kingdom, may be most effectually attained.

PART THIRD.

ON THE

BEST MODE

OF

ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECT.

1 Cor. xii. 31. "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In the first part of the Work we have discoursed of the situation of man, as a subject of the kingdom of God,—and have endeavoured to give some more just and satisfactory ideas respecting the appearances which that situation presents to him, than are commonly to be met with. Our views on these topics, however, it is presumed, will be found to have been such, as not only to commend themselves to the acceptance of men of well-informed and candid minds, —but to afford a simpler and more satisfactory account of the ordinary phenomena of our condition, than the mode of exhibiting or explaining them which is more generally adopted ;—and, at the same time, to afford a solution of many of the apparent perplexities of the subject, which, in the more com-

mon modes of interpretation, seem to be encompassed with inextricable difficulties.

In the second part of the Work, we have followed out the ideas evolved in the first part, by exhibiting what seems to be a simpler view of the object proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God, than that which is usually exhibited as resulting from the more common modes of viewing the peculiarity of his situation, as a member of that kingdom;—and it is hoped that our explanations on this point have been so fully given, as to leave all wish for complete elucidation without any reason for complaint,—while, at the same time, the ideas contained in this portion of the Work will be perceived to be a natural result of the principles unfolded in that which had preceded it,—and to afford a view of the duty required of man entirely in unison with all his natural apprehensions,—and finely evincing the unity of plan by which the whole arrangements of his condition are characterized.

In the part of the work on which we are now to enter, we intend, as the title announces, to explain the *best mode* of attaining the object. Our pur-

pose, however, in this part, is not to give *particular* directions for the conduct of a virtuous life,—these being reserved as the subject of the fourth part of the treatise;—but to correct what we think some very erroneous ideas which, however, are almost universally adopted respecting the *general mode* of accomplishing the duty prescribed to us in life,—and to point out what we esteem the true method, by following out which we may hope to realize the measure of excellence which, as limited yet progressive beings, we are capable of attaining,—and thus may not be forced eventually to bid adieu to life with the melancholy feeling, that in all our attempts at fulfilling our trust we have laboured in vain,—and have either been seeking after a good which it is not permitted to man to realize, or have sought that good *in a way* which, being essentially wrong, could not possibly lead to the end proposed.

This being the general view which pervades this third part of the Work,—we shall, for the sake of greater plainness and facility in conducting our elucidation, subdivide our illustrations into the three following sections:

In the first place, we shall consider the situation of man in this world, viewed as a subject of the kingdom of God, as presenting to him a field of high and progressive movement, in which great issues are proposed to his ambition,—and an opportunity is afforded him of calling into exercise, and substantiating in actual conduct those fine and pure conceptions of excellence which he is capable of forming, and by the power of forming which his nature is so pre-eminently distinguished.

In the second place, we shall consider human life as presenting to every man a series of more obvious, and, in one view of them, of rougher duties, by the influence of which his passions are excited, and his happiness often subjected to great fluctuations,—but by the proper discharge of which his fidelity,—and firmness,—and good conscience, as a subject of the Divine kingdom, are chiefly to be manifested. These are the common and ordinary duties of life, by which the condition of every one man is especially distinguished from that of every other,—and which, altogether, constitute "the trust committed to him;"—by his manner of discharging which his failure or success, as a subject of the Divine kingdom on earth, is chiefly determined.

In the last place, we shall consider the situation of man in this world as presenting to him innumerable smaller and more evanescent duties,—or means either of attaining good or of avoiding evil, —which the generality of men are too apt to overlook, but on the right management of which our success in attaining the object proposed to us, depends, to a much greater degree, than is commonly imagined.

Life, or the situation of men in this world, will thus, according to the foregoing division, present itself to them as divisible into three great fields.

The first comprising that high field in which the great and pure conceptions of good that enter into the human constitution find their appropriate objects.

The second, embracing that middle portion of the vast scene of Nature, which is characterized by the visible objects,—the daily labours,—the hourly vexations,—the rough contentions of life;—in a word, by all the strong and palpable interests that, to the generality of men, make up their earthly condition, —and

The last presenting, though, as it were, on a diminished and dimmer ground, those smaller and more apparently fugitive duties which it requires a finer eye to perceive, and much good conscience to improve,—but which have a powerful, though often imperceptible, influence on the successful issue of the more obvious and rougher duties which are more constantly in our view.

It is hoped, that in the prosecution of this part of the work the Author shall be able to present views as novel, but, at the same time, as instructive and pleasing as in the two former parts;—that these views, also, will be found to be in perfect harmony with those already exhibited,—and, indeed, to be natural consequences of them;—and that they will go far to correct many prevalent errors of a very pernicious kind, and to render the path of duty peculiarly pleasing, by showing it to be that true and good path, in which all our best and most natural feelings should dispose us to walk.

SECTION I.

THE IDEAL—OR DOCTRINE RELATING TO A HIGH STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 8. *If there be any virtue—and if there be any praise*—think *on these things.*

Taking, then, the foregoing divisions as the plan on which we propose to arrange the observations of this part of the Work,—our first series of remarks relate to the proper nature and peculiar functions of that high feeling of excellence with which man is gifted, or that power of forming ideas of faultless beauty by which he is so remarkably distinguished, —and the general maxim, accordingly, which we inculcate on this subject is the following,—viz.—

THAT IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECT PROPOSED TO MAN, AS A SUBJECT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, HE MUST BE CAREFUL TO PRESERVE A HIGH OR PURE FEELING OF THE DEGREE OF EXCELLENCE WHICH HE IS CAPABLE OF ATTAINING,—IN OTHER WORDS, HIS NOTION OF IDEAL EXCELLENCE MUST BE MAINTAINED IN FULL POWER.

For the more perfect comprehension of the meaning and importance of this maxim,—the following topics seem deserving of attention :—

1. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STATING PERFECTION, AS THE OBJECT PROPOSED TO MAN, AND ONLY ASSERTING THAT HE HAS AN IDEAL STANDARD AFTER WHICH HE IS CONSTANTLY STUDYING TO MODEL HIS CONDUCT.

We formerly bestowed some care in endeavouring to prove, that *the object* proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God, is not *perfection* in the strict and absolute meaning of that term, but the due fulfilment of the obligations imposed on him by his appropriate place in life;—we accordingly attempted to show how the idea of perfection, and the term by which it is denoted, are formed by the combined operation of the imaginative and generalizing

powers of human nature;—we remarked, that this conception varies in its character according to the varying powers of all the individuals of the human race;—that, in fact, we have not, and, from the limitation of our powers, cannot have any idea of absolute perfection;—and that much confusion seems to prevail in the minds of men respecting the true nature of the power by which their conceptions of ideal excellence are formed,—and the part which these conceptions are destined by nature to play in the grand office of conducting human nature to its most excellent condition.

We have no doubt that the freedom of our remarks on these topics must have surprised those who have not formerly thought upon this subject,—and that many questions which it is important to have noticed, must have arisen in their minds from our statement.

Is it not, then, a fact, they will naturally inquire, that the human mind has the power of forming some idea or other of perfection? is not the whole language of men pervaded by tokens of the influence which this power exercises over their thoughts? have not the wise of all ages made much use of this capability of human nature? and does not every in-

dividual feel that ideas of this kind are really a part of that rich furniture with which the Author of nature has stored our minds?

Now the answer to all these questions is contained in the two following propositions;—first, that we have a power of forming,—not indeed ideas of absolute perfection,—but what have been termed a *beau idéal* of all the objects that are capable of being made the subjects of contemplation by our imaginative or intellectual powers;—and, secondly, that these ideal models do not, however, point out the *object* proposed to man as a subject of the kingdom of God,—for that can only be the due discharge of the duties placed, at each moment, before him by his situation in life,—but they furnish one of the most beautiful and effective helps that have been given to man for the due and progressive discharge of his task.

In order to perceive the difference between the two propositions,—that perfection is the object proposed to man,—and that he is capable of forming ideal notions of the excellence required of him,—the following distinctions deserve to be considered:

In the first place, the former of these propositions involves the supposition that we are capable

of forming ideas of absolute and unconditional perfection,—a power which, as we have formerly endeavoured to show, is altogether unsuitable to the imperfect and limited nature of all the faculties that belong to us,—whereas the latter supposition implies, that our ideas of excellence, even in its highest state, are relative to the varying powers of the different individuals of our race, and that, in fact, no two human beings have the same standard as the model after which they are working.

In the second place, the former proposition implies, that the perfection of which it speaks, is an *ultimate* and *fixed* object of desire,—something beyond which, from its very definition, no attainments can be made;—the latter supposition only directs us to be constantly aiming at something better than, at any moment, we have already attained;—it is not therefore perfection, as an ultimate point or object, but the *perfecting* of our nature,—that is to say, a constant endeavour to realize the ideas of excellence, that are progressively rising in our minds,—which it presents to us.

In the third place, the idea of perfection, in the strict and absolute sense of that term, considered as the object proposed to man, sets before him a

result which must finally *assimilate* or *identify* all beings,—which will thus ultimately destroy all gradation and plan in nature,—and merge all created natures in the boundless perfection of the highest and purest of all beings;—the other supposition, that, namely, which implies that we must form our lives and conduct by an ideal standard, only intimates, that the varied orders of beings, and the different individuals of the same order, have each a standard proposed to them suited to their powers, and fitted, by this adaptation, to serve them as their guide in the high path of progressive attainment on which they have been called by their Creator to proceed.

In the fourth place, the supposition, that perfection, in the absolute meaning of the term, is proposed to man as the object of his labours, evidently states to him an end altogether *disproportioned to his powers*;—for, of absolute perfection, he is, as we have already said, incapable, from the very limitation of his nature, of forming any conception;—while the statement, that he must have a high ideal of excellence at all times in his mind, proposes to him a rule of action most beautifully suited to his nature, because suggested by the peculiar powers with which, as an individual, he is gifted,—accom-

modated, in its character, to his specific exigences and capabilities,—and fitted, by a gentle and most propitious influence, to lead these powers gradually to the highest measures of excellence and energy of which, from their nature, they are susceptible.

In the fifth place, the former supposition proceeds upon a vague creation of the *imaginative* and *abstracting* powers of human nature;—for perfection, in the absolute meaning of that word, is only an attempt to give a fixed form to a conception which is in itself in the highest degree vague and fluctuating;—while the statement, that we must model our conduct according to an ideal standard which nature has given us the power of forming, rests on a beautiful fact in human nature,—a fact which places that nature in one of its most attractive and pleasing lights, and which evidently leads, or was intended to lead, to the most beneficial results in that progressive course on which man, as gifted with that nature, has been sent.

In the sixth place, the habit of speaking of perfection, as the object proposed to man,—taking that word in its most extensive and absolute sense,—is fitted to lead, and, as all reflecting men must have observed, has actually led to many *fantastic errors*,

and to much serious perplexity in the minds of well-disposed, but sensitive men;—it has, in fact, by means of its universal prevalence, perverted to a great extent the whole structure of human knowledge, both philosophical and theological, and, by its influence on the minds of the generality of men, has involved them in a thousand fears and vain imaginations which it never was the intention of their Creator that they should cherish;—and has, to the same extent, darkened to them the fine order of that plan amidst which they have their place,—and by their co-operation with which they are required to fulfil the destiny of their nature. The other statement, which is, indeed, in all its parts and in its whole influence directly opposed to this, only points to a provision of nature which is fitted to lead to all excellence, and to a constant progress in every valuable attainment;—for it merely tells us, that we have the power of forming visions of excellence far finer than at any moment we are capable of completely realizing;—that these, however, are to be our guiding lights in life;—and that it is by following them that we are progressively to advance nearer and nearer to the actual exhibition of the most faultless excellence we are capable of conceiving.

Such is a statement of the very different nature of these two ideas,—viz.,—that of ultimate perfection,—and that of an ideal beauty with which we are, at all times, capable of investing any subject of our contemplation;—and as they are thus distinct in their nature, so are they in the place which they hold, or in the purpose which they are intended to serve in the constitution of human nature. For we have now to solicit the attention of the reader to the following concluding remarks,—viz.:

That though we again distinctly state, that the object proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God, can be nothing else but the due fulfilment of the part intrusted to him, by his constantly-varying and progressive situation, amidst the works of God,—we are very far from denying, as must be evident from the preceding remarks, that the power which he possesses of forming ideal conceptions of excellence and beauty is one of the most admirable and beneficial of all the provisions by which his nature is enriched. We only say, in the first place, that, from the confusion which is too characteristic of all human speculations, this power has been mistaken for

something which is really quite different from it in nature and tendency;—and, in the second place, that its purpose is not to point out *the object* proposed to man, but to afford him one of the most excellent and effective of all the aids that have been granted him for the attainment of that object.

We have thought it necessary to enter into these details, because we believe that the ideas of men on this subject are of the most vague and delusive kind;—and we again urge it on our readers to keep in mind, that the object proposed to man is, and can only be, the due fulfilment of the part intrusted to him in life;—that perfection, in the absolute sense of that word, is an idea not competent to the human mind, which, in all its powers, and in all the exertions of these powers, is necessarily limited and imperfect;—and consequently not capable of forming the idea even of perfection;—and, in the last place, that the beautiful and fine power which really characterizes human nature of forming ideal conceptions of excellence and beauty,—and of thus regulating all its conduct and all its attempts at progression by these conceptions, is, however, a power which belongs to the varying nature of the infinite multitude of individuals that exist,—and has for its purpose,

not to point out the object proposed to man, but to aid him in the attainment of that object, by constantly leading him towards higher measures of excellence than, at any moment, he is capable of realizing.

The Author cannot refrain, before concluding this topic, to recommend it most earnestly to his readers to make this subject familiar to their minds, because he is satisfied that human knowledge is at present pervaded and vitiated by most unsatisfactory and erroneous ideas on this point,—and that a just and steady conception of the process by which the human understanding forms ideal models,—and of the place and function which, in the general constitution of human nature, these conceptions hold,—as pointing out, not the *object* proposed to man, but one of the best *means* of attaining that object,—would go far to remove much perplexity from the minds of men,—and make them see the whole arrangements of their present condition under more luminous,—more pleasing,—and more useful views.

VARIETIES IN THE MORAL FEELINGS OF INDIVIDUALS,—AND IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THESE FEELINGS PURE AND ELEVATED.

What we understand by the *moral* feeling or sentiment of an individual, is his disposition,—a disposition which is in all cases characteristic of human nature,—to view all actions and characters under the impression of their being *right* or *wrong*,—to be quick in receiving such impressions from everything that is presented to him,—and to have thus all nature coloured to his eye by the aspect under which these sentiments exhibit it.

Now, in this respect it is notorious that there are great and obvious differences in the natural or acquired constitutions of different minds. In many individuals this correctness of moral apprehension can scarcely be discerned;—or at least, in their actual conduct, they are so much under the influence of inferior and opposite impressions,—that their *moral* nature seems scarcely to be brought into action.—Other men are correct enough in their general deportment, while, at the same time, they discover little that can be correctly designated as *moral* feeling,—for it is not as properly morally beauti-

ful, or deformed, that actions are regarded by them, —but rather as simply useful or advantageous;—and though, therefore, a quick sense of their own temporal welfare perhaps keeps them from all offences against propriety, they have nothing or little of that pure and high feeling which is properly constituent of *moral* sentiment.—There are other men, again, whose moral feelings are naturally correct,—but do not exist in any high degree of sensibility; —they start from what is *obviously* bad,—and are incapable of doing any thing that is felt by them to be wrong;—but, at the same time, their mental constitution is naturally cold and phlegmatic,—and they are not formed for ever attaining high degrees of moral excellence,—or for exhibiting a style of conduct that is fitted to draw great and general admiration.—There are also some individuals whose moral feelings are naturally of a high order,—but unfortunately these are associated with a corresponding host of different and lower propensities;—such men, accordingly, live in a perpetual struggle between their perception of what is right, or their regret for what in their conduct has been wrong,—and their innate disposition to act contrary to their feelings;—they are thus, commonly, the most un-

happy of all men,—and with respect to them, when viewed as what, from their good moral feelings, they might have been,—the beautiful saying is strikingly verified,—that "Babylon in ruins is not so melancholy a spectacle."—There are, lastly, a few individuals to be met with whose mental constitution is of the most excellent kind,—who have their moral feelings not only correct, but keenly alive to the beauty of conduct,—and whose constant endeavour, assisted by a happy mental organization, it is to realize, in their actual conduct, the high conceptions that habitually are present with them.

It is farther worthy of remark, that the moral feelings of *all men* are extremely liable to be influenced by either propitious or unpropitious circumstances. For an apparently slight deviation from propriety,—or an occasional familiarity with vice, will lower to a great degree the moral sensibility of the best-constituted minds;—and, on the other hand, even the most obdurate minds may be raised to a high degree of moral enthusiasm,—by the exhibition of any character that is, in a superior degree, characterized by moral excellence,—or by the expression even of a *sentiment* that touches strongly those moral sympathies which belong to human na-

ture,—and which lie, though in a dormant state, even in the depths of the most wayward hearts. Indeed, it is pleasing to observe to what a degree of power these sentiments are capable of being awakened, by such occasional excitement, in all human beings;—and there is no risk of error in affirming, that of all the sentiments of human nature, these are they which are capable of taking the most powerful and absorbing hold of all human hearts, when characters or sentiments that are pre-eminently fitted to awaken them, are presented in an efficient manner.

Now, with respect to *communities* of men, the great object of all education and government is to preserve these moral feelings in, at least, a *correct* and *steady* state. We question the propriety of all attempts to produce *high excitement*, even of a moral kind, among large assemblages of men;—for in all communities there must also be a strong force exerted by the lower and opposite feelings of human nature;—and the danger, when we have to do with communities, is, that periods of high excitement will be followed by times of great moral laxity, —or rather that the excitement which at first seemed to have a moral character, will degenerate into some-

thing that is precisely the reverse of moral. What is chiefly desirable, therefore, with respect to communities,—and what ought, consequently, to be aimed at by all public instruction and legislation, is the maintenance, not so much of a highly-excited state of moral feeling as of a correct and steady impulse of this kind;—because it is by such quiet but steady impulses chiefly that the great interests of society are promoted,—and a judicious public instructor or legislator will always be better pleased to see his compatriots proceeding quietly but steadily in the right track, than to perceive them under the influence of any violent emotion, even though that emotion should "lean only to virtue's side."

So much we think quite correct with respect to communities;—and even with respect to individuals the first thing of moment is to have their moral feelings at least free from contamination,—and above yielding to any thing that is obviously wrong. A placid but steady feeling of this kind is indispensable to every man who wishes to secure his own quiet,—or to act respectably before his fellow-men.

This, we have said, is the first thing to be gained by every individual,—and the most important by far which he can seek to appropriate;—because this

degree of moral feeling is necessary to keep him from the innumerable temptations to do wrong which beset all men "on the right hand and on the left;" —and till this has been acquired, there is no chance that any of the good, either present or future, which existence offers to the ambition of man, can be realized. But, at the same time, no individual is warranted in permitting his moral acquisitions to terminate with this degree of propriety in his sentiments and conduct. He must, on the contrary, be constantly endeavouring to keep his moral feelings not only correct and steady, but elevated and pure, and keenly alive to all the forms of moral good; —he must have a fine idea of excellence constantly in his mind;—and must, under the influence of this high conception, be disposed to consider himself as sent on a high and glorious race, in which all actual attainments are constantly giving place to the pursuit of future excellencies that are more attractive and divine.

Life, with all its incidents and actions, thus becomes to the man who has this high feeling of the duty prescribed to him,—and of the attainments which he is capable of realizing,—what their respective arts are to the painter,—the poet,—the sta-

tuary,—the orator;—to all, in short, whose business it is to embody ideal conceptions of beauty in actual and faultless productions. All of these artists are aware of the importance, and, indeed, of the necessity of a high standard of excellence in the mind of him who is destined to gain the most valuable honours of his art;—and, perhaps, it is chiefly from the acknowledged necessity of this feeling, in these arts, that we have been able to gain, at least, so distinct and universally-applicable an idea of the necessity of a corresponding ideal in all that man is capable of undertaking.

Now, it has been finely said by Dr Smith, that of all the arts to which man can apply himself, the most excellent and important by far is that of the right ordering of his own life,—and that, if it be glorious to finish, in the best style, any production in which mere matter is the subject on which we operate,—it must be infinitely more honourable to give to the whole train of incidents which make up our own lives, that *finish* and *perfection* which is accordant with the ideas of moral beauty we are capable of conceiving,—and without the actual exhibition of which, in our conduct, we must constantly have the impression that there is, in our style of act-

ing and thinking, some great defect which we were bound to have supplied,—some absence of a beauty which alone can satisfy our natural feeling of excellence.

But this high finish cannot be given to the life of any man,—whose mind is not under the influence of those pure and warm conceptions of ideal excellence which we are now recommending;—and, on the other hand, when such feelings habitually actuate any mind, they will naturally lead to an endeavour to realize the mental conceptions which exert so general an influence on our habitual style of thought; —and, under this influence, there can be no question that life may be made, in the conduct of an individual, to present something both of beauty and of dignity far surpassing what it is commonly seen to display,—and fitted to awaken the warmest,—and profoundest,—and most lasting admiration of those who witness it;—to produce, indeed, a feeling of beauty and a sentiment of admiration far exceeding what even the most finished specimens of human art are capable of producing.

To have succeeded in gaining this beauty of conduct is indeed the highest good, as it presents the most lovely aspect, of human nature;—and a con-

stant endeavour to realize this excellence is what is properly meant by *striving after perfection.*

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE FOREGOING VIEWS WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

It were easy to show that Christianity, throughout the whole range of its discoveries, is adapted to offer the most splendid models,—and the purest and most ennobling images to the moral ambition, and to the imaginative propensities of human nature. Every thing, for example, which it has revealed respecting the character of God, and his relation to us as creatures bearing "his image;"—his having addressed himself to us by means of a "revelation," in which we are invited to hear "the words of God himself" speaking unto men;—his determination, made known in this revelation, to raise mankind to the character and station of his "adopted children;"—and his final purpose of "crowning them with glory, honour, and immortality;"—all of these, and indeed the whole series of the Christian doctrines, are fitted to awaken in a high degree the moral sentiments of the human heart,—and to propose an ob-

ject to man, the highest and most inviting which it is possible for him to conceive.

At present, however, we pass by all consideration of Christianity generally,—and solicit the notice of the reader to what may be considered as its central fact,—its grand and characteristic peculiarity;—namely,—the discovery which it has made to us of "the Son of God" in human nature,—"God manifested in the flesh,"—and proposed as our example in "the way that leadeth unto life."

Nothing can be conceived more surpassingly glorious and alluring than this idea. All nations have manifested a disposition to seek out some grand and pure models, after which they might fashion their conduct,—or, by the contemplation of whose excellencies, at least, they might occasionally gratify their propensity to form high notions of the moral grandeur which human nature is capable of attaining. The multitude of the Gentile nations, accordingly, had their sages,—and patriots,—and warriors,—and legislators,—men who had lived in purer and more golden ages,—who were, accordingly, endowed with attributes, both bodily and mental, above the attainments of common mortals,—and to whose characters and achievements the *people* looked back with in-

tense feelings of the high grandeur which human nature had sometimes been able to exhibit.

The philosophers of antiquity, in the same manner, had their ideal Wise Men,—characters formed by their own powers of fancy,—to whose contemplation they loved to betake themselves,—and after whose faultless excellence they hoped to form their own notions and conduct.

But Christianity has far outstripped all the previous thoughts and imaginations of men on this point. It reveals to us, not merely the wisest and best of men,—but one who came among us as "the Son of God,"—and whose character was marked by all the excellencies which so high a descent entitled us to expect;—and it proposes to us this model of spotless and Divine excellence,—exhibited in the form, and amidst the circumstances of the nature with which we ourselves are gifted,—as the standard by which we are required to form the conceptions of our minds, and to regulate all the actions of our lives.

This is the central and characteristic fact which it establishes;—it is, in its own bold language, "God manifested in the flesh,"—a Divine being alighting upon the surface of our world,—and exhibiting our

nature in the utmost perfection which is competent to it. It is, at the same time, this grand character, not lost in unapproachable excellence,—or invested with an effulgence of glory which we can neither imitate nor love,—but, on the contrary, it is the truly astonishing and matchless union of Divine Majesty with human love and boundless pity;—it is a Divine Messenger on an errand of mercy,—and "God manifested in the flesh," to shed grace and peace over the whole face of our world.

Now, surely, every person must feel, that of all the models that could have been proposed to man, this is the one best fitted to address itself to his imaginative powers, in their purest and most unbounded range,—the best adapted to coincide with and to exalt that natural ideal of all excellence, which lies at the bottom of all human hearts,—and the most excellently suited, consequently, to exert an effectual influence in disposing human beings to strive after "all virtue and all praise."

And if any person should object, that here, at least, we are called by Christianity itself to perfection, in its widest sense,—and that, consequently, what we have formerly said respecting perfection, as the object proposed to man, cannot be correct,—or, at

least, is not coincident with the very spirit, and most characteristic part of the Christian revelation,—we have only to say,—that, though we should not have considered the objection as possessing in itself any force whatever, yet, as it is likely to occur to many minds, and may lead, by the refutation of it, to a very beautiful view of the provisions of Christianity, the following consideration ought to be sufficient at present fully to remove it.

The consideration to which we allude is this,—that the perfection displayed by the Son of God was not, assuredly, the perfection of God,—or that assemblage of attributes which we conceive as constituting the Divine nature in its absolute sense,—but the perfection which is competent to the nature of man;—it was human nature struggling amidst difficulties,—and discouragements,—and toils,—and persecution,—through long years of patient endurance,—amidst fears,—and humiliations,—and severe privations,—and, at last, yielding to the greatest of all human sorrows,—by the endurance of a public and shameful death,—in the cause of truth and righteousness.

We shall have occasion, before concluding this part of the Work, to advert to this aspect of the

Saviour's character more particularly, when we treat of the mode in which our ideal conceptions of excellence may be substantiated in actual conduct amidst the ordinary endurances and labours of life;—and we shall then, by combining this last aspect of his character with that which it offers to us while we view it simply as that of a Divine Being, bearing the transcendent title of "the Saviour of the world," endeavour to show how admirably it is fitted for being a model to us, both as imaginative and active beings,—both as beings who are required to cherish high and pure notions of ideal excellence, and who are commanded to realize these amidst toils and patient endurances, that seem little favourable to their exhibition.

At present, we wish only to draw the attention of the reader to the transcendent grandeur,—to the Divine mixture of dignity and of grace,—of godlike purity, and of human good-will to men,—that makes up the ideal excellence of the Saviour's character, as revealed in the Gospel,—and to represent how beautifully this portrait is adapted to coincide with, and to improve, the highest and purest ideas of excellence we can form;—how far, in point of fact, such a model, so recommended, must have gone to purify and

exalt the moral susceptibility of the whole Christian world,—and what great effects may still be expected from it, if its native beauty were more faithfully exhibited.

It is not irrelevant to our present purpose to remark,—that this high model has not been proposed in vain,—that its power has not been altogether lost upon the minds, at least, and imaginations of men; —for the Divine and spotless beauty of the Saviour's character is that to which the minds of all men most naturally revert;—and there is no need of words or exhortations to impress this Divine image upon their souls. On the contrary, even the most careless or worthless of the Christian population,—think with inward reverence, and with deep self-abasement, of the celestial glories of the character of "the Redeemer,"—and, however far their actual conduct may be from corresponding with this model, there can be no question, that, at least, their feelings are true to its Divine majesty.

And hence we may perceive the importance of keeping up this impression upon the minds of men, —and one beautiful feature in the economy of our religion,—which thus seeks, by its most central and characteristic fact, to purify the living seat of all

human affections,—and to offer the most splendid of all models as an object, both for the contemplative and active powers of human nature.

Hence, also, we see the danger which lurks under the attempts, so often and so zealously made, to lower in our estimation this truly Divine model;—to strip the Saviour of the Divine majesty which belongs to him as "the Son of God,"—and "the Redeemer of mankind;"—and to bring down our thoughts to those views of his condition which represent him solely as one "made like unto ourselves." These representations are, no doubt, sometimes conscientiously made, with the view of correcting what seem to be fantastic errors;—but they would, we doubt not, if universally adopted, lead to errors of a far more depraving and pernicious kind;—and it is, therefore, consolatory to think, that such "low views" never can generally be entertained,—but that the human heart will always attach itself, with its most reverential feelings, to those aspects of the character of the Redeemer which give him "a Divine glory" in the eyes of men,—and which, consequently, fit him for being the model, by which their imaginations may be exalted,—and their moral sensibility carried to its utmost pitch of purity and warmth.

IN WHAT SENSE SENTIMENT OR ENTHUSIASM IS NECESSARY IN A TRULY VIRTUOUS CHARACTER.

If the question to which this title relates had been merely an incidental result of the speculations of philanthropists at a particular period, the Author would not have thought it deserving of a very serious consideration. But, as it is a question which has its foundation in some apprehensions that are easily awakened in the human mind,—and is apt, accordingly, to be put and acted on by a great multitude of those who are called "men of the world," at all times,—and as the principles we are illustrating in this part of the Work afford a clear and decided answer to the question, it seems proper that we should now state the views which we entertain, and which we deem important to be universally entertained on this topic.

Perhaps the precise nature of the question will be best understood by viewing it, first, as it exists in the minds of mere men of the world,—and then, by proceeding to consider the more general aspect which it assumes among speculative and philosophical inquirers.

Every person, then, must have observed, that

among those who are occupied with the daily transactions and pressing interests of life, there are at all times a great many individuals who sneer at the idea of being governed in their conduct by *sentimental feelings*,—or by views of *general* or universal rectitude. They lay it down as a maxim, that their conduct should be regulated at every moment, —and throughout all the vicissitudes of it, by a regard to what seems to them to be most expedient or advantageous at the time;—and as to fine feelings of moral duty,—or a regard to fixed and universally-applicable laws of morality, they consider themselves as warranted in viewing them as but portions of that tendency to mysticism or foolery, which human nature, wherever sentiment is concerned, is so apt to display.

This mode of thinking and speaking, however, has not been confined to mere men of business and of the world;—for theories, proceeding from men of speculative minds, have adopted the same principles as the basis of their reasonings,—and the idea, that utility and morality are, to all intents and purposes, the same,—or rather, that we should judge, and determine our feelings of morality solely by a regard

to the utility of our actions,—has been adopted and defended, with much ingenuity, in some of the most popular theories, that, during the last century, were current in the world.

Hence a prejudice in favour of this mode of viewing morality,—and a corresponding tendency to sneer at all *moral feelings* and *general rules* of conduct, strictly so called, became fashionable over the greater part of the continental countries. Those who acted upon *moral feelings*, or were governed by a regard to *general maxims*, were termed, in derision, Ideologists;—and, in works of literature or of speculation, the question was often alluded to, or discussed, how far it was necessary that a man of virtue should be a man of sentiment,—or how far he might trust his conduct solely to his apprehension, at the moment of action, of what he conceived to be most expedient and advantageous.

Such is the question;—and the principles we have stated, in the course of this section, or the views of the constitution of human nature which it has suggested, and on which it proceeds, will enable us, we hope, to give a clear and peremptory answer to the doubt which it expresses.

The fact is, then, that both religion and morality, considered as attributes of the rational mind, belong essentially to its *sentimental part.*

Thus, for instance, with respect to religion or piety :—there are many men who view all religious services simply as something *useful* and *decorous.* They believe that civil society could not be preserved in order,—nor the good conduct of families maintained,—nor the purity and correctness of individual life supported, unless religious services were established and attended. They are, consequently, most strict and exemplary in their own observance of all such duties,—and they do what they can to enforce the observance of them on other men. But still, with all this, it is simply as *useful* institutions that such services are regarded by them,—for piety, *as a sentiment*, has no influence over their minds. They are not, in fact, men of sentiment in any respect, and it is not to be supposed that this highest and purest of all sentiments should characterize them. Wanting, however, the sentiment of piety, it is plain, that, though observers of all the ordinances of religion, they are not *pious* men, in the proper sense of that word;—nor would any person, acquainted with the motives of their conduct, apply

that epithet to their characters. In order that any man may be a *pious* man, he must feel the *sentiment* of piety,—and must be guided in his conduct by this feeling.

The very same mode of reasoning applies to morals. A man may be governed in his conduct by a strict regard to *utility* or *expediency*, and, under the influence of such views, may be without reproach,—or even exemplary in his active and social transactions,—and, so far indeed, he may be said to be a strictly moral man;—meaning by that phrase solely that his actions, so far as man can judge of them, correspond with the dictates of sound morality. But if it is not a regard to *moral* considerations,—if it is not a moral feeling,—that actuates him, it is as evident,—as in the former instance, with respect to piety or religion,—that the man who has no moral feeling as the motive of his judgments and conduct, cannot, in the strictest sense of the phrase, be styled a moral man. It is not sentiment that actuates him, but views of utility;—but moral feeling is at all times a *sentimental* thing;—and though, therefore, the individual under consideration may be strictly honest or punctual in his dealings,—he wants that high or fine tone of feeling which be-

longs to those who are properly men of virtue,—and which must belong, in a high degree,—that is to say, must exist as a warm, and pure, and universally-pervading feeling in the minds of all those who aim at high degrees of virtue,—or who would exhibit a style of acting which shall awaken the admiration,—and attract the love of those who witness it.

There must, therefore, be enthusiasm to a certain extent,—and in a certain sense, in all virtue; —that is to say, there must be a feeling of *moral beauty or grandeur*, as applicable to actions;—and this feeling must be in a high tone wherever virtue, or moral worth as such, can exist in an eminent degree.

So much with respect to the necessity or importance of being guided by feeling in our moral conduct. The question, however, has a still more important aspect,—and leads to a more momentous result;—for those who scoff at *sentiment* in morality also set at nought *general rules* of duty;—and this tendency may be observed, both in the conduct of private affairs, and still more remarkably in the direction of public interests.

The principle of such men is, that *expediency* or *utility* is, in every instance, the sole rule of action;—and that it is only giving ourselves up to delusion, or *ideology*, when we presume to act upon maxims, which, however apparently *general* in their application, must, according to their views, have more of sentimentality than of sound wisdom in them, when regarded as the actual guides of conduct.

Now, no mode of thinking can be more dangerous than this;—for it leaves to individual choice the determination of measures which have a prior and far more important rule in the universal experience and native feelings of the human heart;—and, accordingly, there is no mode of acting that more certainly defeats its own purpose in the long-run,—by involving those who adhere to it in inextricable perplexities, from which adherence to the *general* rule would, though sometimes at an *apparent* risk of present advantages, have utterly saved them.

And, as the rule is thus dangerous,—so it is founded upon most erroneous views of the constitution of human nature,—and of the guides which Nature, with unerring wisdom, has furnished for the regulation of conduct,—whether private or public. For our moral feelings,—and all morality, in

truth, have a relation, not to *partial* views of expediency but to *general maxims*;—and an adherence to such limited and low views is, consequently, equivalent to a subversion of all moral conduct,—and betrays an ignorance of the most important and influential parts of the human constitution.

The conclusion of the whole is, that, in order to be a *pious* man, in the strict sense of that expression, a man must be alive to a *sentiment* of piety, —and be guided by it.

And, in order to be virtuous, in the strict sense of that epithet, he must have *moral sentiments*,—or a fine ideal of what he may and ought to be,—and a corresponding love and admiration of the excellence he has thus conceived as attainable by himself.

And, consequently, in the last place,—that this feeling must be maintained by a sacred regard to those *general rules*, which recommend themselves to all hearts as the true guides of conduct, and with which all our *moral feelings* are indissolubly connected.

ON THE HIGH RANK WHICH CORRECT MORAL FEELINGS, AND A CONSCIENTIOUS REGARD TO THE GENERAL RULES OF GOOD CONDUCT, HOLD IN EVERY JUST ESTIMATE OF THE TRUE WORTH OF HUMAN NATURE.

Men are capable of applying an ideal standard, not only to their moral state,—but to all the other accomplishments that are competent to their condition;—and, accordingly, an excellent rule is given by some continental writers, who have treated of our notions of ideal excellence,—namely, that these different *ideals*, as they are termed by them, should be maintained in their just and native subordination to each other.

The following observations, from one of the most judicious of these writers, are so applicable to our present purpose, that we think them worth translating:—

"The experience of all ages has shown, that the greatest and most dangerous extravagances are to be apprehended, when the *proper relation* of our *ideals* to each other, and the subordination that ought to result from their relative importance are misunderstood,—and they are either isolated,—or

the less dignified are preferred to the more noble. A person, for instance, who separates his ideal of the *beautiful* from all others, and attaches himself to it alone, may be a great poet or artist, but will be disposed, at the same time, to admit every kind of immorality into his conduct. He who regards only the ideal of the *general good*, without subjecting it to the ideal of morality and of justice, will become a cosmopolite, in the worst sense of the word,—an enthusiast for liberty and equality,—by whom no mean will be regarded as too dreadful, which promises him the accomplishment of his plans of reformation. The man who thinks only of the ideal of *happiness and enjoyment*, and pays no regard to the ideal of morality, and of the general good, will become either a malcontent, who is dissatisfied with his own condition, and with the whole arrangements of Providence,—or an egotist, an unprincipled voluptuary. He who entirely *disregards the ideal of the beautiful and the fit*, may be possessed of much knowledge,—may be a man of honesty and moral worth, —but he will be revolting by the rudeness of his manners,—he will be deficient in that grace and amiability, which every truly accomplished man ought to possess."

In addition to these observations,—the Author thinks it only necessary to draw the attention of his readers to the following instance of this want of just apprehension respecting the true value of our relative excellencies, which is of such common occurrence as to demand a particular exposition,—and for the sake of an opportunity of explaining which, indeed, this paragraph was chiefly designed.

In general, our moral feelings, and our regard to the rules of conduct are very strong in early life,—though accompanied with many prejudices, and with much erroneous apprehension as to the appearances of Nature and of life.

Among the multitude of individuals, however, whom we daily observe around us,—there are two classes that are deserving of notice, for the sake of our present argument.

In the first place, there are many individuals who pride themselves in having escaped from the prejudices of early life;—they scoff at the restraints by which the minds of those, under whose influence they first formed their notions of duty, are held in durance;—and neglecting the cultivation of the *moral feelings*, and perhaps throwing aside all regard to the rules of action, they plume themselves on the idea

that they are "wiser than their teachers," and may allow themselves in extravagances or vices, which, under a severer discipline of their better nature, would have filled them with horror.

Young men,—philanthropists,—and a multitude of others who are immersed in the pursuits or hazardous speculations of life,—belong very commonly to this class.

On the other hand, and as a contrast to persons of this description, we often observe, in humble and private life, individuals whose minds are still under all the influence of their earliest prejudices,—but all whose *moral feelings* are in the strictest and purest order,—and who attach themselves with the justest apprehension, and with unalterable firmness, to all the *approved rules* of virtuous conduct.

Now there can be no question that there is no incompatibility between these two orders of accomplishments, and that the most excellent characters are those in whom enlightened views and sound moral feelings are in strict and well-balanced harmony.

But if we were required to say, upon the supposition of these two orders of accomplishments being separated, to which not only the truest excellence but

the highest rank in the constitution of human nature belongs, we have no hesitation in avowing, that the poor widow, who, in a humble cottage, is still the slave of many unfounded prejudices, but in whom all her *moral feelings* are in the most just and sensitive condition,—and whom no temptation could induce to commit the slightest infringement on the *approved rules* of good conduct, is not only a more virtuous, but a far higher being in the scale of true excellence, than the man of the most enlightened views, who is yet regardless of his *virtuous sentiments*, and who sets at nought the *ordinary rules* of decency or of good conduct.

Indeed the longer most men live, and the more just their apprehensions become, the more are they convinced that the judgment we have now given is that which is best founded in all true views of the nature and condition of man;—and one of the happiest attainments which any man can gain, is an abiding conviction, that this rule is the true test of human worth.

It is then,—and this is the conclusion to which, in this illustration, we wished to draw the attention of the reader,—of the utmost importance that, in forming our *ideals* of the different orders of accomplish-

ments, we should give them their true relative merit and proper subordination to each other,—and that moral worth, that is, the possession of just *virtuous feelings*, and a sacred observance of the *general rules* of *good conduct*, should be regarded as not only the best but the highest of all the accomplishments that can belong to our nature.

The true good of human nature may be attained by such feelings and such conduct even amidst the utmost limitation of view, or erroneous notions of the appearances of nature or of life;—but the most luminous ideas respecting all human subjects of thought is worth nothing, when it is considered as an apology for the slightest infringement of ordinary propriety of feeling, or regularity and decency of conduct.

MEANS OF IMPROVING SENSIBILITY TO MORAL EXCELLENCE.

The Author has no intention of detailing at length all the means which may be employed for this purpose;—indeed their full display would supply materials for an interesting work;—he only means

to hint at a few of them, which should be sacredly attended to by all persons who would either preserve their moral feelings from being debased, or who wish to carry this fine portion of their nature to its highest state.

In the first place, then, all the exercises of piety have an obvious tendency to elevate and refine our moral sensibility. Indeed, the Author has already had occasion to remark, that the distinction which is commonly made between the moral and the religious feelings of human nature, is one which is to a great degree arbitrary, or at any rate, that the idea which he has assumed as the foundation of this treatise, by considering man simply under the aspect of a subject of the kingdom of God, and as offering to him a becoming service by all the departments of his duty, leads to an identification, in our thoughts, of these two descriptions of feeling. Instead, therefore, of saying that religious exercises have a tendency to refine our moral feelings, it would be more correct, according to this arrangement, to say that religious exercises are the employment of our moral feelings on their highest and most suitable objects;—and every person, therefore, who values the best state of his nature, ought to cultivate

a sacred reverence, and pay the most scrupulous attention to all the forms of piety. "The offering up of a prayer to God when the day begins," seems to hallow all our affections throughout its progress,—and who can listen to "the word of God" either by private consultation of that record in which he is considered as speaking to men, or by joining with others in the public solemnities of the sanctuary,—without feeling that he has been "in communion" with the holiest of Beings,—and that after such communion all the forms of vice ought to be "an abomination in his sight?"

In the second place, nothing is so detrimental to moral feeling, as low ideas of what human nature is capable of becoming;—these low ideas, however, are unfortunately very apt to be engendered by intercourse with the world,—that is, by much experience of the actual depravity of human nature,—and consequently one of the best means of awakening and refining our moral sensibility, is familiarity with such examples of human worth as are adapted to give us high notions of the capabilities of the nature of which we are partakers,—a renewal of that feeling with which we commonly commence life, but which is apt in its progress to be destroyed or

obstructed, that we are in some sense "partakers of a Divine nature,"—and that there is scarcely any height or purity of virtue which, by due cultivation, the human powers are not capable of reaching.

It is of the very first moment to have these ideas of what man may be, and actually in living instances has been, in full operation, if we would have our moral sensibility maintained in its highest and purest form;—and, with this view, it is good to be familiar with the study of the pure examples of virtue with which the past history of the world may furnish us. It is on this account, as we formerly noticed, that the "perfect example of the Author of Christianity" is of such unspeakable value for the moral regeneration of the human heart;—and, in the same view, it is good to be acquainted with, and in the habit of meditating on, the characters and actions of the eminently good and great of all past times. These, in the dimness of forgotten ages, appear to us with something of the lineaments and the grandeur of a Divine nature;—and thus falling in with the most excited state of our imaginations, they preserve in us a conviction of what human nature may be, and actually has been, and prepare us for seeking in some measure to realize in our own

characters the pure and high conceptions that have become familiar to us, and which we believe to be capable of actual realization.

In the third place, it is of great moment to every man who aims at the cultivation of his moral feelings, to be especially careful as to the characters of those with whom he is most in the habit of associating;—for a man's intimate friends not only have a great influence on his happiness, but almost form his very character,—and, at any rate, the society of persons of delicate moral perceptions is one of the most obvious and powerful of all means for communicating a corresponding delicacy to those who are familiar with them.

In the fourth place, it is a fact, that all the parts of our sentimental nature are finely connected, and exert an influence on each other;—and an obvious consequence of this fact is, that where there is a tendency to moral sensibility in any character, that tendency will be strengthened by the delicacy given to his sentient nature generally, by familiarity with the fine productions of Art or of Nature. All the fine arts,—poetry,—painting,—music,—and the kindred studies;—familiarity, too, with beautiful and

grand views of external nature,—and a habit of daily reverting to the contemplation of them,—are all helps, in a mind already virtuously disposed, for carrying virtuous sentiment to its highest pitch;—or rather the feelings which these beautiful or grand productions awaken, run, by a very natural process, into that peculiar feeling which is awakened by what is strictly the beautiful in action,—and are thus but portions of *one fine mechanism* which pervades and distinguishes the human soul.

In the last place, the moral sensibility of the human soul is, in one sense, the most easily affected of all things either for good or evil,—and the most important of all rules for elevating its sensibility, is that which directs that "the very appearance of evil" should be avoided,—and that, even in the apparently least important things, the voice of duty should be instantly obeyed. He who yields to any known sin, loses unavoidably the sensibility of his nature to the beauty of what is good;—and he, on the other hand, who keeps a strict watch over his conduct,—may not only maintain through life something of that pure and enviable feeling with which we commonly enter on it, but may prepare himself

for receiving,—as a recompense from the loving-kindness of God, the most blissful presentiments of that divine progress, which his nature, if thus preserved from depravation, is fitted to realize.

SECTION II.

THE ACTUAL.

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1 Cor. xvi. 13. *Quit you like men, be strong.*

In entering on that part of the Work which treats of the best method of accomplishing the object proposed to man as a subject of the kingdom of God, we stated our purpose to consider the field of duty laid before man,—as naturally dividing itself into three compartments;—the first comprising those duties which belong to him as a being capable of forming high and pure ideas of the part assigned him,—ideas which are not seen realized, in all their perfection, in any of the actually existing specimens of creation around him,—but which are yet to serve him as models according to which he is to form

his judgment of the comparative merits of things,—and to guide his endeavours after that degree of excellence which, by the constitution of his nature, he is fitted for attaining.—The second compartment of the vast field of human duty we regarded as comprising those "rougher and more substantial labours" which belong to every man as the occupant of a definite station amidst actually existing interests; —this is the great field of real life,—that scene in which the fine conceptions of our ideal part are seen, —not indeed fully realized,—but symbolized and substantiated amidst a series of momentous,—and laborious,—and progressive duties,—and by the success of an individual in cultivating which, in so far as the powers actually intrusted to him permit, his true character as an efficient member of the Divine kingdom is determined.—The last portion of the great field of duty comprises those apparently smaller and more evanescent interests or occurrences, —which, to the generality of men, are apt to seem of little moment,—but which are yet essentially connected with the most substantial objects and events that can engage their study,—and have, almost in all cases, a far more momentous influence on the issue of such objects or events, than to our short-

sighted and superficial view they sometimes appear to exert.

The first of these regions may be figured as belonging to that "high and ideal world," of which, as the possessor of an intelligent and spiritual nature, man is a part;—the second embraces those strongly-marked and substantial events that surround him as the inhabitant of a material and visible world;—and the last passes imperceptibly from this visible scene,—into the more dimly-discovered region, in which small duties,—and almost imperceptible interests have their place.

We have, in the preceding section of this part, said all that seems necessary to be stated, in so far as the first of these compartments is required;—and we have been the more particular in our remarks, because, in the first place, the consideration of this subject afforded an excellent opportunity of explaining more fully our ideas respecting the common misapprehension of supposing that perfection, in the absolute and widest sense of that term, is the object proposed to man,—and of showing what is the difference between thus aiming at "absolute perfection," and only having a "fine ideal of excellence," which, however, is not the object proposed to us,—but one

of the most excellent means afforded by nature, for the successful prosecution of our object. The object really proposed to man is the due discharge of the duties set before him by his situation in life; —but that object is to be secured in the best style, not by aiming at perfection in the absolute sense of the word,—but by following out that ideal model, which, by the constitution of our nature, we are fitted to conceive. In other words, in order to do well the part assigned us,—we must be careful to cultivate a pure and high sense of moral excellence; —our moral feelings must be correct and lively.

A second reason for detailing so fully as we have done, our notions on the first topic, is, that these moral sensibilities being a part, and a very high and important part of our nature, their cultivation is one momentous part of the entire trust committed to us;—and he would be deficient in one of the most essential parts of his duty,—who, even though he should fulfil all common obligations in the most satisfactory manner, should yet leave his own fine powers of thought and of feeling in a state of neglect;—and should thus, as the possessor of such powers, permit himself to be divested of "that diadem" with which his Creator has crowned him,—

and the possession of which is his chief ornament and glory.

But our third reason for having drawn so particularly the attention of the reader to this part of human nature is, that according as it is in a well-cultivated or neglected state, the whole of the more substantial and daily-recurring duties of life are likely to be well or ill performed;—for no man can be expected to perform a pure or high part in life, who has but a low idea of the duties which life presents to him;—and in order that the streams of daily conduct may run clear and salubrious, it is obviously necessary that their source be purified from all defilement,—and that they be permitted to flow, without mixture and without restraint, through all the "issues of life."

Indeed, every person must be aware of the importance of having the moral sensibilities pure and well ordered, and directed towards high objects, in order that the duties of life may be performed in the best, —the most graceful,—and most efficient style.

Take, for instance, a man who has but a low feeling of the excellence that may be reached in any department of conduct,—who has no fine moral taste,—nor any high standard after which he is

working in his daily expedients amidst the passing interests of the world. The effect of such a state of mind in any individual unavoidably is, in the first place,—that even the ordinary and indispensable duties of his place are performed by him in a vulgar,—imperfect,—and unattractive manner;—he makes less of these duties than he might have done;—and life, in his hands, seems to be something "without dignity and without grace."—In the second place, such a man has no motive sufficient to draw him aside from the influence of the most common and debasing temptations;—and as these are mixed with all human pursuits, and must be resisted, that the stream of conduct may flow successfully to its issue, he is in constant danger of marring all the effects of his better deeds by the poisonous influence under which he occasionally permits himself to fall.—But most of all is it true of every such individual, that no *high* excellence will ever be displayed by him in the part which he acts,—and that his mind is not such as adapts him for those great services,—or for executing those momentous trusts,—or for displaying that magnanimous conduct in any circumstances, which chiefly present to us the idea of what is really admirable in human conduct,—and in the characters

of men. In one word, life, to a man so poorly endowed, is at all times, and throughout all its bearings, something that is essentially low, and vulgar, and unattractive.

Permit, on the other hand, a man differently gifted,—and enriched with other accomplishments and other views of life, to enter on the same field of action,—and every observer will at once perceive the wonderful effect which a pure and high feeling of excellence has on the whole conduct of him who possesses it. For in his hands the most common duties and daily occurrences of life assume a high, and amiable, and graceful character;—if difficulties or temptations meet him, he is prepared for bidding them defiance, because he is in pursuit of a great purpose, from which low and vulgar gratifications or ordinary obstacles cannot withdraw him;—he is ever ready to seek and to discover opportunities of noble conduct, where minds less highly gifted would have passed them unobserved;—and when occasions of heroic or magnanimous exertion are put in his way,—he acts like one endowed with strength and views above the common reach of man,—and becomes an object of admiration and love to all who witness his conduct.

These are the men who support the true dignity of our nature while they live, and who leave behind them a name which reminds other men how high human nature is capable of advancing,—or how much of what we conceive as "truly divine," occasionally belongs to it.

We now proceed to the consideration of the second portion of the great field of human duty,—that, namely,—which comprises the visible interests,—and substantial transactions of ordinary life;—and as we formerly laid down one great rule,—that, namely, respecting the importance of high and pure moral feelings, when we began the consideration of the former portion of the general duty of man,—so we may comprise, in the following maxim, the substance of all the illustrations we are about to offer on the second compartment of the great field of life,—viz.

THAT THE SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES IMPOSED ON US INDIVIDUALLY BY OUR PLACE IN LIFE, OUGHT TO BE THE GREAT OBJECT OF OUR ENDEAVOURS,—AND THAT EVERY OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT WHICH WE MAY SEEK, AND ALL THE RULES OF ACTION WHICH WE OBSERVE, SHOULD HAVE A RFFERENCE TO THESE DUTIES.

For the more full evolution of this maxim, the following illustrations seem to be important:

DANGERS INCIDENT TO MINDS TOO EXCLUSIVELY OCCUPIED WITH NOTIONS OF IDEAL EXCELLENCE.

We have already remarked, that our moral feelings, or our notions of ideal excellence, are deserving of cultivation,—and of being carried to their highest and most perfect state,—not merely on account of the important influence which they exert on the whole character and conduct of man, but for *their own* sake, as a part, an important and characteristic and most glorious part of his entire nature; —as such they are, as much as any thing else, in his nature or situation, a portion of that trust with which he has been honoured;—and are entitled to a

cultivation corresponding to their excellence, and to the high place which they hold in the constitution of his frame;—they are, in fact, his most brilliant and valuable gifts,—"the diadem" with which, as "with glory and honour," his Creator has encircled him,—and which, as the most splendid boon of his Creator's bounty, and his own most becoming ornament, deserves to be kept in its highest polish, and to be surrounded with all becoming safeguards.

For it must never be forgotten, that when we speak of the duties of his place in life as being the object proposed to man as a subject of the kingdom of God, we include in this description, not merely his external duties, but the right ordering of his own nature with all its powers,—both corporeal and mental;—and, consequently, these powers demand his especial care,—according to their relative value;—not merely for the influence they may have on external actions, but for their own sakes as parts of the great trust with which he has been honoured.

But, then, reverting particularly to our moral feelings or notions of ideal excellence, we may observe the following most momentous errors as liable to result from too exclusive or marked an attention to them.

In the first place, the person who is so exclusively bent on notions of ideal excellence, is apt to suppose that the cultivation of these is in truth the grand and the whole duty that has been appointed to man,—and that provided he can keep this furniture of his spiritual part in high condition, he need give himself little concern respecting the other attributes or accidents of his lot in life.

This is what is commonly called "striving after perfection;"—the person so occupied feels as if there were an ideal world of beauty and of purity, into which, if he could only force himself, all else would go well with him,—and his whole sphere of duty would be completed;—he consequently gives all his attention to the "keeping of his own heart," or rather to a weak lamentation over the errors, and weaknesses, and sins that actually deform this ideal beauty as applicable to himself,—and busying himself with vague, and aimless, and most delusive struggles to secure for his imagination "ideal perfection," he becomes a useless visionary, in so far as the "real interests" of human life are concerned,—and "spends his labour in vain, and his strength for that which profiteth not."

It must not be supposed, that by these observa-

tions we mean to underrate the value of pure and high moral feelings, or of such labours as are prudently and effectively directed towards the cultivation of them. On the contrary, we esteem no labour more noble or more glorious and useful than this;—but then our approbation is founded on the supposition, that the efforts which we make with this view are wisely directed, and have a tendency to realize their object;—and what we really find fault with, is but a delusive semblance of this high and "profitable" labour;—it is a mere sighing over apprehended weaknesses and follies, without the employment of any well-devised or prudently-conducted means for carrying our nature to a better state,—an overshooting of the mark which has been really set before us,—and a morbid sickliness of our own fancies, rather than a manly and becoming endeavour to secure, by just and expedient means, the pure and noble excellencies which we believe to be so valuable.

No person acquainted with human life and the various characters of men will deny, that a vast multitude of the "well-disposed" are in precisely the condition we have now described;—and perhaps there are few men who have been much occupied with the

cultivation of their own minds, who have not occasionally felt themselves prone to run into this error, and to feel, consequently, all the vain and unprofitable anxiety with which labour so misdirected is necessarily attended.

It follows, in the second place, from the same general disposition, that the person who is so entirely occupied with *ideal good*, is less inclined to reach his point by the methods which nature and experience recommend,—that is to say, by the slow but sure use of approved and well-devised means,—than to realize it by *one or a few great efforts*:—Being, in his opinion, a good altogether distinct from the palpable and ordinary objects with which he is surrounded,—an entirely "spiritual and Divine" good, —there is no need or propriety that it should be pursued by means of objects or trains of incidents so entirely dissimilar to its own nature;—he sees not why he may not *at once* "destroy all sin" in his nature, and take possession of "all purity and all holiness;"—and perhaps he reasons himself into the belief, that the work will be more certainly and efficaciously done in this summary manner, than by the slow, and, as he thinks, dubious process of experience and application. He forgets, or has not

yet learnt, that he is aiming at a shadow;—that his excellencies and defects have both been the result of *habits* which were gained by time,—and can only be slowly and surely done away by other habits;—and that his pure and general conceptions of ideal excellence are simply the result of an effort of his imagination, but are entirely incapable of being realized in his conduct and dispositions by any method of the same *summary* kind.

This, too, is an evil of most extensive prevalence, and which no attentive observer of human life can have failed to witness in actual operation, or perhaps to have detected in his own endeavours to become "perfect before God."

A third evil consequence of the same habits, when carried to excess, is an incapacity in the persons so trained, for encountering the harder and more trying difficulties of real life. This indeed is the grand mischief which, in this portion of the work, we are chiefly anxious to point out and to expose,—and it is not difficult, we apprehend, to explain in what way this incapacity is generated. For, setting aside all other debilitating effects which the habit in question must have, it is plain, that the actual duties and interests of life, in order to be managed with success,

and in the best style, require that the mind should be trained to them by previous habits of exercise and discipline;—but the man who is occupied chiefly with ideal good, lives in a world in a great measure distinct from the present;—he comes, therefore, to the discharge of actual duties, when, by the resistless course of events, he is summoned to them, almost as if he had come from a different, and, in all its objects and bearings, a dissimilar world;—and the common observation, accordingly, respecting such men is, that however distinguished they may sometimes be for the reach or fineness of their intellectual or imaginative powers, in all that relates to real life, they betray only the imbecility and ignorance of children,—and seem to move amidst interests which they are unfit to manage, but by which they themselves, on the contrary, are borne resistlessly along.

It is further true, however, in the fourth place, that to such characters the events of real life are not only above their powers of management, but commonly seem to be of *too little consequence* to deserve any great share of their attention or anxiety, —that is to say, they not only are afflicted with an incapacity of conducting them, but they are extremely apt to form a very low notion of their true

importance. Of this tendency, also, the reason is obvious. Men of fine moral sensibilities, or rather of high notions of ideal excellence, dwell chiefly amidst conceptions which are *general* and *universal* —and which, to their reasoning and contemplative powers, seem to involve consequences of the most extensive range. The events and interests of actual life, again, are all particular,—and have no consequences, in their opinion, beyond the moment at which they are produced and perish;—but *universal beauty* and *general laws* are the only things which their habits of thought incline them to value, or which they think *worthy* of being valued,—and hence, while they are entirely absorbed in their general problems, or have their whole minds occupied by their pictures of ideal beauty,—they permit the most substantial interests of real life to pass without notice, as unworthy the attention of minds whose proper sphere they presume to think is of a much higher and wider order.

With this incapacity of managing external occurrences,—and this low opinion of their true value,—there is naturally combined, in persons of this turn of thought,—a want of all *real interest* in such events. And of this, also, the reason is simple and obvious.

The person who is occupied with notions of ideal excellence, we have said, is *incapable* of managing external occurrences, from want of practice, and because he comes to them like a person from a different sphere of occupation. He is also, we have said, disposed to form a *low notion* of their worth or importance,—because his mind is chiefly occupied with *general* conceptions,—or such as seem to him to involve an infinity of results, while the external events of life are all *particular*, and perish as they pass;—and we now say, that every such mind must be afflicted with a want of interest in such occurrences, because they necessarily fall far below the habitual subjects of his contemplation in beauty and attraction. He lives amidst *ideal* conceptions of excellence and happiness,—and there are no colours too fine for the heavenly glow with which his ideas are tinged,—nor any forms of beauty too perfect to be their suitable prototypes. But, alas! all *human things*,—all the objects, and events, and interests of this life,—are poor,—and mixed,—and imperfect,—and unsatisfactory;—such has, in fact, been felt to be their character, even by minds most disposed to look at them with desire,—and how utterly worthless must they then appear to him, who has "a world

of his own," where all forms are perfect,—and where a Divine and imperishable glory is diffused over all the objects that compose it!

In one word, this world is not beautiful or perfect enough for the worshipper of ideal excellence,—and it is not to be wondered, that, with his habits, he should feel little interest in any of the things that make up the grand prizes of contention for the multitude of men.

Now, all this is not merely a fanciful delineation, —or a description of what might happen on certain suppositions;—it is a plain account of one of the most generally-prevalent evils by which the lot of life is varied and afflicted;—and he must be a very inattentive observer of the characters and prevailing dispositions of men,—who has not frequently had occasion to remark to what an extent this malady reigns,—and how powerfully it is fostered by erroneous modes of education,—and by the influence of injudicious habits.

Without pretending to give a full enumeration of the classes into which persons of this general description may be arranged,—the following seem to

be some of the most remarkable and prevailing varieties :—

In the first place,—there seem to be a great multitude of persons, whose minds are originally of such a stamp, that they are irresistibly disposed to abstraction and retirement. They shrink from observation, and from the irritating struggles of life ;—or, at least, they are fond of dwelling chiefly with their own thoughts, even when these are not remarkable for any thing superlatively beautiful or attractive ;—and, to all of these persons, life presents only a succession of interests which they care not to observe,—and in the management of which they have neither the wish nor the power to take a part.

In the second place,—there are a vast multitude of persons, in whom a similar disposition is produced and fostered by the erroneous views of religion,—and of human duty,—and human prospects,—which they have been early and habitually accustomed to contemplate. For we have already had repeated occasion to observe, that, according to the belief of many persons, all material and visible things are but hinderances in the course on which they ought to be bent. It is "perfection,"—the keeping of the spiritual and invisible world "pure and undefiled,"—on which they

are chiefly intent;—and there is no connexion or affinity, in their opinion,—no relation between the events and interests of this world,—and those of the invisible state for which they are anxious to qualify themselves. Their principles and habitual views, of course, lead naturally to the belief, that the more they can disengage themselves from all temporal interests, the more likely are they to proceed on their spiritual journey without hinderance. At any rate, they have no idea that temporal and eternal things have any affinity of nature,—or reality of connexion; —and, provided they attend to their "spiritual concerns,"—they venture to think that they may safely permit their temporal interests to take any such direction as chance may impress on them.

No person will dispute, that a great portion of the religious instruction which is current in the world has this tendency;—and, with such views, the wonder is, that men should still continue to take so much interest as they actually do in such "worthless and perishing things" as the affairs of this world. It is, indeed, a strong instance of the power which natural feelings, and the practical good sense that belongs to the generality of men, even amidst the most erroneous speculative views, are capable of

exerting,—that, believing time and eternity have no proper relation to each other,—but rather that the former is in opposition to all the interests of the latter, they still are led to enter into human concerns, as if all their hopes were dependent on the due management of them. But though this is the effect of natural feelings,—and of that practical good sense which is common in the world,—the speculative errors, which have an opposite tendency, also exert a most powerful and extensive influence;—and multitudes are withdrawn from, at least, that *degree of interest* which they would have given to temporal concerns, by a deep-rooted and speculative belief,—that they have interests of "another and an opposite kind," which are far more worthy of their regard,—and which are best performed when they are not interfered with by any temporal anxieties.

There are, in the last place, a multitude of persons of a different order. It is not so much, perhaps, either a natural disposition to abstraction,—or the influence of peculiar religious views,—that produces their peculiarities;—but it is a natural fineness of perception, that refuses to be gratified with ordinary interests;—or habits of dwelling amidst creations of ideal beauty,—which have loosened

their attachment to all actual existences. These are the men who are fitted to excel in the practice of art,—and sometimes to delight and enlighten mankind, by the beauty and wisdom of their speculations and views;—and, if their lot has fallen in private and affluent circumstances,—or if Providence has permitted them to cultivate their taste for science or for art,—they may enjoy a high measure of the happiness which falls to the lot of man. But for the management of actual and hard duties they are commonly greatly unqualified;—and if, as sometimes happens, there has been such a discrepancy between their tastes and their stations,—that they are forced to take a part in bustling or public scenes, there are no men that lead a more unhappy, and, to themselves, less satisfactory life,—or that less effectually perform the part assigned them. They may be excellent guides to other men by their wise speculations,—or may delight the world by the beauty of their productions, if devoted to the practice of art,—or, in retired and affluent circumstances, they may be models of elegant and refined enjoyment;—but, for the ordinary affairs of life, they are utterly unqualified, and it is good, both for them and for these affairs, when they have nothing to do with them.

General, however, and extensive as the evil is, it is not the less ruinous in its consequences. For, in every particular instance in which it prevails, it produces a character that is defective and imperfect in a most important point. It unfits the person so afflicted for what ought to be his chief and most important duty,—a strenuous contention with that course of events,—sometimes good and sometimes evil,—by which every human being is constantly borne along, during his progress through this life;—and, by so unfitting a man for what should be his most important duty,—in fact, renders him incapable of performing that part, which, from his "very station as a man," he is chiefly called to act.

And all views that have a tendency to produce such effects,—by leading to the exclusive cultivation of the higher and more ideal parts of our nature,—as if that were the chief duty required of man,—are vitiated by the error of substituting a part for the whole. They have a tendency also to lessen to our view the beauty,—the simplicity,—and the fine consistency and harmony of those arrangements by which the world is governed,—and which unite in one un-

broken scheme the interests of the visible and of the invisible kingdoms. They lower, in the last place, our estimate of the importance of the rough and ordinary duties of human life,—and, in so far as they do this, have a tendency to throw error and confusion into all our ideas respecting the very objects on which it is most important that we should look with just apprehension and with warm interest,—that we may be able to put forth the strong,—and long-continued,—and ardent energy,—by which, only, as inhabitants of this laborious, and uncertain, and continually-varying world, we can perform our part with credit and success.

HOW LIFE AND ITS INCIDENTS OUGHT TO BE VIEWED.

The first and grand impression which we should endeavour to gain,—and to make familiar, not only to our understandings, but our hearts and imaginations, is that which we have endeavoured to present throughout the whole of this Work,—namely,—that the affairs of this life are to be viewed as but parts of one vast scheme with those which are to disclose

themselves to us in future and greater portions of our existence;—that we are here placed as it were on a narrow space, all the objects of which are distinct and tangible, and present themselves in well-defined masses of light and of shade,—but all of which also belong to a more extensive field which is not fitted, in its greater and more distant portions, to be viewed by our present senses,—though it is in continuous connexion with that visible portion over which we have the most entire control;—and that, consequently, there is not only no incompatibility between the "things which we see" and those which are more dimly discerned by us,—but that it is by the manner in which we conduct ourselves amidst the former,—that we are to qualify ourselves for progressively rising to the view and the management of interests of a much greater and more extensive kind.

This, we have said, is the grand impression which we should endeavour to gain,—and this mode of viewing all present interests and duties,—should not only be made familiar to our understandings,—but be incorporated with all the habits of our *imaginations and hearts*. For the great want among men is not so much that of just views, in so far as the mere *convictions of the understanding* are concerned,

—but rather the tendency of their *imaginations* to regard things under aspects different from those which they know and believe, in their moments of reflection, to be the only just modes of viewing objects;—and every man, therefore, who wishes to have his mind set at rest upon this subject, should make it his endeavour to address himself to the discharge of all present duties under an impression,—which admits of no hesitation,—that he is now acting a part, amidst visible interests and scenes, by the success of which his fate is to be determined, when greater and more lasting interests shall have more clearly revealed themselves to his improved and enlarged powers.

Having made this general view of the relation between present and future things familiar to his fancy,—the first object with every man ought to be to ascertain for himself what is the precise character of the duties to which he is called by *his* peculiar station in life. It is in the highest degree detrimental to the success of any person to have *no distinct* idea, or but a wavering and uncertain conception of the *particular* series of duties which belong to his own place in life,—and there are few better modes of giving peace to the mind,—and of enabling a man

to avail himself of all his powers for the discharge of his duties, than that of having first stated distinctly with himself what is the precise import and character of the exertions which he is required by his appropriate station in life to make.

In many cases, the duties belonging to a man's sphere of life are *so distinct* and definite, that it is scarcely possible for him, if he exercises but a moderate degree of reflection, to mistake their nature. In other cases, where these duties are of a more fugitive,—or uncertain,—or varying character, the task of defining them is, consequently, more difficult;—but, in every case, every thing depends upon the will and good intention of the agent,—and there is, perhaps, no situation whatever, of which the occupier is not in a condition to describe the duties in a satisfactory manner to his own mind, provided he be disposed to view them with the attention and the desire of ascertaining them, which, as the possessor of a reflecting and provident nature, it behoves him to exercise.

Here also, however, as in the former case, the object to be gained, is not simply to *understand* our duties,—but to have the view of them made so familiar to our minds,—that they may act as a constant

and spontaneous motive to their own accomplishment.

In the second place, it is important for us individually to believe, that life does not consist of *insulated results*,—but is one great whole to every man; —some parts, indeed, of that whole stand out more prominently to our view than others,—or, in other words, life seems to present to us a *succession* of results, which we are progressively called to exert our powers in securing,—while, at the same time, we fancy that these results *terminate* in themselves,—and that we may stop at any part of our progress without much detriment to what is to follow. This, however, is a very erroneous or limited view of the actual condition of life to every man;—for, on the contrary, there is no part of it so distinct from another as not to have some effect upon what is to follow it,—nor any incident of it so apparently small and insignificant, as not to be in strict connexion with the most momentous,—and to have an important influence on the determination of the whole plan.

Hence, we should accustom ourselves to view any present result we may have gained, not as a point at which we may stop and repose ourselves,—

but as a mean of securing farther advantages, which the progressive flow of events is constantly opening up. We should be like consummate generals in the art of war;—ordinary leaders having gained a victory are apt to rest themselves, as if nothing more were required of them,—or as if they might now leave future issues to chance;—but first-rate commanders consider all advantages as but introductory to others that are still to be gained,—and it is by pursuing this plan that they secure the most important and gradually-increasing successes.

Another inference from this connexion of events is, that we should gain the habit of viewing even the most *apparently insignificant* events as capable of being made of much importance in the conduct of life,—and that we should never permit ourselves to believe, that we can certainly tell to what great results even the most minute incidents may lead, if they are well improved, and taken advantage of for a length of time. This subject, however, will be more fully considered in a subsequent section.

These observations naturally lead us to remark, in the third place, that, having ascertained our plan of life, we should consider ourselves as bound, by every regard to our successful conduct of it,—to

permit no *selfish* or *limited view* of present enjoyment to interfere with the prosecution of that train of events, from which we hope for future and far more enduring results. It is because they are thus led aside from their main object, that to most men life presents but a constant succession of failures and of regrets,—that they cannot tell whether they are advancing or retrograding at any point of their course,—that altogether they have but little enjoyment of life,—and that when they review it from its more advanced stations,—they cannot perceive, that it has been to them any thing but a series of wayward issues,—to which they have been led by constantly-varying impulses,—and have never been able to realize the advantages which, from the circumstances in which they were placed, they seemed called on and entitled to have secured.

In the same spirit, life should be viewed by us, in the fourth place,—not so much as a scene of unmingled enjoyment,—as a strong *contention*, in which we must meet with difficulties and trials, as well as with incidents of a more soothing character;—for, by its very nature, life is to every man a mixed scene of good and of evil,—and he who, in entering on any new career in life, expects to find it

but a series of enjoyments,—or who supposes that he is never to be called to struggle with unpropitious and trying circumstances, is but discovering the weakness of his own mind,—or manifesting at least a delusion,—which, though extremely apt to impose upon men when fortunately placed,—is yet at utter variance with the essential constitution,—and with all actual experience of life.

Life is thus a game in which we are individually called to take a share,—and the best player is not necessarily the man who gets through the game with the least obstruction,—but he who, amidst many difficulties, yet possesses so much of energy,—of patience,—and of good conduct, as eventually to overcome them all.

In the last place,—it is important that all the duties of life,—even its hardest and most trying,—should be encountered,—and gone through with *cheerfulness*,—and with the alacrity of men who have a pleasure in the game,—and who love it not the less because it calls them occasionally to a *severe exercise* of their powers. This, indeed, is the great art,—and the happiest accomplishment for the due conduct,—of life,—to make all the incidents of it minister to our enjoyment,—not by the absence of

difficulties,—but by the energetic and joyous spirit with which we meet them;—to consider ourselves as running a high race in the sight of all those good and great minds that exist throughout the universe;—and especially to have satisfaction, amidst all difficulties, in thinking that they have been put in our way by a Master of perfect wisdom and goodness,—whom it is our interest to serve,—and to whom we delight, by all our conduct, to testify the pleasure we have in following out the course which he has prescribed to us. We are like seamen embarked on a difficult voyage,—or soldiers called to a severe campaign;—and the best and happiest man is he who can find a pleasure in all the labours to which his service calls him;—and who has more delight in overcoming obstacles, than in indolently reposing amidst prosperous incidents.

The whole of these views and maxims, however, we have again to repeat,—are not to be viewed merely as objects of the understanding,—but to be incorporated with the whole train of our *sentiments and persuasions*;—and he only regards life justly,—and with true satisfaction,—who has been able to

disentangle himself from all opposite views,—and at all moments,—and as it were by a spontaneous feeling,—to realize the impressions which these maxims suggest.

COINCIDENCE BETWEEN THE PRECEDING VIEWS OF LIFE, AND THOSE PRESENTED BY THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF CHRIST.

We had occasion, in the preceding section, when speaking of the importance of a high and pure sense of duty,—of warm and elevated moral feelings,—of an imagination conversant with models of the most faultless excellence,—to show how admirably Christianity has provided for this exigency of our nature, by having proposed to us, as an object of contemplation and love, not merely the most excellent of human beings, but the character of One who bore the transcendent title of "the Son of God,"—and who stood, and continues to stand, in a relation to mankind different from that in which any ordinary partaker of their nature can ever be placed,—that, namely, of the "Saviour and Redeemer" of the human race.

Perhaps, however, it is chiefly under this Divine

aspect of his character that our Saviour is commonly contemplated by us. The distance at which he seems to be placed from us,—the splendour of the work to which he was appointed,—and the Divine honours to which he is now raised in the kingdom of God,—seem all to conspire in placing him beyond the sphere of our sympathies and fellowship; —and our imaginations accordingly invest him with attributes, which, though the most magnificent and even lovely conceivable, have yet little or no relation to the ordinary feelings and common circumstances of the nature which we bear, and of the condition in which we are placed.

Indeed something of this Divine aspect is thrown, by the distance at which they are placed, by the splendour of their actions, and by the greatness of their fame, over the characters of all the eminently good who have become the objects of much veneration to mankind;—and there seems to be a *natural tendency* in the human *imagination* to seek for itself some models of conduct more suited to its own aerial character, and more adapted to convey to it the impression of perfect excellence and Divine worth than any that are ever found among living men.

We shall greatly mistake, however, the true service which Christianity has rendered us, and shall fail to perceive some of the most beautiful aspects in which it offers itself to our notice, if we believe that it is solely or chiefly as an object of high contemplation for our *imaginative* powers, that the character of our Lord is presented to us in Scripture ;—it is also as a model for *imitation* amidst the trying and depressing circumstances of ordinary life, that we are more especially called by the histories of his life to regard it ;—and nothing can be more beautiful than the harmony which thus prevails between the Divine *glory* of his character as the Saviour of mankind,—and the *pattern* of all patient and persevering endurance amidst the events of a life peculiarly exposed to suffering and reproach, with which it also so instructively furnishes us.

The reader who wishes to see this aspect of our Saviour's character treated more fully, will find this object accomplished in that portion of the Author's treatise on the Last Supper, which is entitled, "On the Imitation of Christ." The following observations are merely a summary notice of what that discourse contains,—and are, at the same time, an exemplification, from the conduct of our Lord, of the princi-

ples or maxims that have been stated under the preceding titles of this section.

It is quite plain, then, generally, that our Saviour had *no visionary* ideas of the object prescribed to him by his appearance on earth,—and by his station amidst the usual circumstances of human nature. He knew that there was a plain and *definite purpose* of his appearance marked out for him by the circumstances amidst which he was placed,—by the powers with which he was gifted,—and by the opportunities of exertion that were offered to him,—and that he must accomplish "*the duty*" for which he was called before he could attain to "the glory" which afterwards awaited him,—by so passing through all the circumstances of his present lot as to vindicate his title to future eminence and surpassing glory in the Divine kingdom. He thus always spoke of "the work that was given him to do,"—of the "day of labour" during which he must apply himself to his task, because "the night was approaching when no man could work,"—and of "the will of his Father," for the fulfilment of which he had appeared among men,—and bore his commission as the Messenger of God. The *actual circumstances* of his lot, in short, were to him the indication of the plans which

it was his duty to fulfil;—and it was by availing himself of these circumstances that he hoped to become, though at present placed in an apparently hopeless state of indigence and humiliation, the author of the most divine and enduring of all blessings to the human race.

His first object, accordingly, as the occupant of such a condition, was to ascertain for himself the *plan of life* which these circumstances pointed out as most agreeable to the will of God, and most likely to accomplish the purpose of his mission. This deliberate selection of his plan of conduct is accordingly most distinctly intimated to us at the very beginning of his public career, when, after having been declared by a voice from Heaven to be the Son of God, he retired for a season to the wilderness, that he might meditate on the future purposes of Divine Providence towards him. The temptations then presented to him, were those of declaring himself to be "the Son of God," by a course of conduct suited to the splendour of so Divine a title;—but Jesus rebuked them all, by a reference to the will of God as made known to him by the actual character of his circumstances and powers;—and it is evident, that, at this very time, he preferred, by

a deliberate act, the humble and beneficent path which he eventually pursued, to all the more dazzling exhibitions of his essential grandeur which were suggested to him.

Having thus chosen his course of life, it is beautifully intimated to us, in the second place, by the whole tenor of his history, that he did not seek to accomplish his purpose *instantaneously*, or by a few great exertions, but rather to wait, by a patient use of such means as were in his power, till Divine Wisdom should see fit, in the proper time, to bring forth its own grand purposes for the reformation of mankind;—and not only did he set himself to a quiet waiting for the result, but, during his labours, as preparatory to this, he was willing to avail himself of the humblest means of doing good which the events of Providence might offer to him. He thus began his labours as a "preacher of righteousness" in a distant and unnoticed portion of the country of his birth;—he patiently devoted himself, during several years, to the laborious and unambitious duty of preaching the "doctrine of the kingdom, and of healing all manner of sickness among the people;"—and though he knew that his doctrine was eventually to overspread the earth, and to become as a "great

tree, the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations,"—he yet refused not his aid to any humble soul that asked of him direction, nor hesitated to subject himself to any personal inconvenience, that he might cure the disease or revive the hopes of any afflicted heart.

He thus beautifully accommodated himself to the plan of Providence which brings out its own issues *gradually* and after due time,—and which also often makes the most apparently *poor means*, the ultimate occasions of the most extensive and lasting results.

In the same spirit, our Saviour refused, in the third place, to permit any *selfish* or *indolent* feelings to withdraw him from the plan which his own deliberate choice, and the obvious indication of the circumstances of his lot, pointed out to him as most becoming in him to pursue;—his whole life was thus spent by him in labours,—and watchings, —and journeyings,—and privations of all kinds;—the "work that was given him to do" was ever the motive that suggested itself, amidst all circumstances, to his thoughts;—and, in the prosecution of this work, he grudged not, though "the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests," that "the Son of Man had not where to lay his head."

In the last place, he was not impeded in his course by the severe *trials* and persevering *opposition* to which, from various quarters, he was exposed in the prosecution of his schemes. On the contrary, he toiled amidst poverty,—and contempt,—and hard labour,—and many attempts on his life, in a firm belief that he must, amidst all these, "work out the will" of his heavenly Father;—and knowing, at last, that he must seal his mission by a public and shameful death, he yet "set his face steadfastly" towards Jerusalem, knowing that, through this most fearful of all trials, he must "finish his work," and finally "enter on his glory."

Such was the actual course of our Saviour's history. He aimed not at any *visionary* object,—nor did he seek to accomplish that *object hastily* and by one or a few extraordinary efforts,—but he accommodated himself to the course of events which formed his *peculiar situation* in life;—he patiently did the good that was offered to him;—he refused no opportunities, however apparently *small*, of being useful to those whom he came to instruct and to heal;—and he *persevered* in this patient and humble course of well-doing, not only in defiance of all selfish or indolent feelings, but throughout much opposition,—and

contempt,—and hatred,—and, at last, by submitting to the lowest ignominy and most fearful trial into which a human being can fall; that, I mean, of terminating a laborious and well-meant series of actions by the endurance of a public and shameful death.

It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose, that it is simply as an object of devout admiration that our Saviour's character, as the Son of God, is presented to us, or that its only intended result was the purification of our *imaginative* powers, by presenting to them a perfect exhibition of godlike virtue and Divine beneficence. It is as a *laborious* and *suffering* partaker of human nature that he is chiefly presented to us in the histories of his life which have been transmitted to us by his personal friends;—and, according to this view, his best follower is not necessarily the man who passes through life amidst the *fewest* hardships, but he, rather, who, amidst *many* trials, yet so conducts himself as to make them all issue in his own final welfare.

The truth is, however,—that it is by the *union* of these two aspects of our Saviour's character,—that his example becomes so admirably adapted to the *whole demands* of our condition,—by exhibiting to

us a *Divine object* of contemplation for the purification of our thoughts, and the elevation of our fancies in pursuit of true goodness,—and, by setting before us *a pattern* of patient endurance, amidst scenes of long-continued trial, and in circumstances similar to those which make up the suffering and laborious life of all who pass through this "vale of tears."

If this latter aspect of our Saviour's history were better understood, and made more familiar to the minds of men, it is probable that their whole ideas of the genius of his religion,—and their consequent conception of the duty incumbent on them, as his followers, would undergo a great and wholesome change. It is, in truth, the best of all examples for showing us what is the relation between the things of time and the rewards of eternity,—or, in the words of his Apostle, for making this great truth operative on our minds,—that "glory, honour, and immortality" are to be won, only by "a patient continuance in well-doing," amidst the peculiar circumstances in which, as inhabitants of this earth, we are individually placed.

CONNEXION BETWEEN HIGH MORAL FEELINGS AND A SUCCESSFUL DISCHARGE OF ORDINARY DUTIES.

The observations under this title are meant to reconcile the results at which we arrived in the first section of this part, with those which have offered themselves to our consideration in the course of that we are now concluding.

And there are but three brief observations, to which, under this title, we think it necessary to call the attention of the reader.

In the first place, men are fitted by nature, and have the means afforded them by their station in life, for acting *very different* parts. Throughout the whole of this treatise, we have spoken of the due fulfilment of our active duties, considering these as pointed out to us by our powers and circumstances, —as the grand object proposed to man, as a subject of the kingdom of God. But it must be kept in mind, that the *same kind* of duties are not required of every man. Some are fitted for the management of ordinary and severe duties of an active kind,—such as make up the common business of life;—and others are better qualified for contemplative or studious pursuits,—or for looking at life, and

its manifold operations, so as to afford to others, who have not the same turn, such lessons of conduct, and views of their condition, as may best qualify them for acting their parts with propriety. Our Saviour himself was chiefly called, during his earthly sojourn, to the duties of a public instructor, and a dispenser of relief to those who were diseased;—and there is no indication in his history that he regarded himself as bound to busy himself with secular and temporal interests.

It is unfortunate, when either those who are fitted for active labours are forced to busy themselves in contemplation, or in the improvement of art;—or, on the other hand, when persons of studious dispositions, or of fine perceptions, are necessitated to give their chief attention to more common concerns. Neither of these, when their natural situations are thus changed, are fitted for conducting the affairs forced on them in the most successful manner;—and this alteration of circumstances never fails, in either case, to be productive of much suffering and humiliation to those whose lots have been so unfortunately arranged.

It is, hence, of great moment to every man that he should calmly consider, and successfully decide

on the kind of occupation for which nature, and the course of events, seem to have destined him;—because, being fitted, according to the *ordinary course* of Providence, for but one sphere of duties, it is that one only in which he is likely to do the work committed to him with propriety;—and it is in it only that he can so labour as to realize the greatest quantity of good to the kingdom of God, which, by his circumstances and talents, he was designed to accomplish.

At the same time, each of these characters is, in so far as their powers are of this limited description, necessarily imperfect, and, to a certain degree, feeble;—and the *most perfect character* is that of him who unites both talents,—and who can devote himself with success to speculative or imaginative exertions, without, at the same time, neglecting any one active duty which belongs to the sphere in which he has been placed.

In the second place,—it is generally supposed, that there is an essential incompatibility between liberal or highly-cultivated views and the ordinary interests and labours of life,—or, that men who have but narrow notions, provided they are possessed of decision and firmness, are better qualified for mana-

ging the common transactions of this world than they would have been, if disposed to act upon the most enlightened and comprehensive maxims.

Now it is true, that we often see men of the most limited views guiding their affairs with success,—while, on the other hand, we as often witness the melancholy spectacle of men of the most comprehensive intellects falling into great errors in the management of common transactions.

This, however, proceeds from *no incompatibility* between these different talents,—but because firmness and decision are often wanting to the man of comprehensive intellect,—while these are the chief requisites for ordinary affairs ;—and there can be no doubt, that the most perfect and successful conductor even of the most common transactions, would be the man, who, with the perseverance,—and firmness, of ordinary characters, should unite the most liberal and enlightened modes of acting and thinking.

Public and great transactions, at all events,—that is to say, transactions involving consequences of *lasting* and *extensive* influence,—ought never to be intrusted to any but men who are disposed to conduct them with the most comprehensive and liberal views ;—and, even in private life, the same rule is

applicable, provided activity and perseverance are not wanting, to give effect to schemes originating in wise and enlightened policy.

In the last place, it is a fact, forced on our notice by daily experience, that a man often succeeds better in life by acting conscientiously and firmly with a *small portion* of wisdom,—than by the possession of the most enlightened views, if he has not the power of steadily adhering to them;—and there is, consequently, great folly in those who despise the maxims of homely but well-intentioned minds, when these maxims lead to virtuous and just conduct,—even although the maxims themselves may be characterized by a great mixture of error or of inconsistency.

But here, also, we repeat the observation we have already urged with respect to the two preceding topics, —namely, that though, when two defective characters are compared, the solid advantage lies with him who is most persevering and decided in action,—though possessing very limited notions,—rather than with the man, who, with far better ideas of what is right, is yet incapable of acting firmly and conscientiously according to his ideas,—still this advantage is only comparative,—and the most perfect character is that

of him, who, with just, and luminous, and comprehensive principles,—and with high feelings of honour and of delicacy,—is also possessed of that discretion,—and firmness,—and perseverance,—which enable him to transfer his speculative views, with entire effect, into the conduct of actual and pressing affairs.

So much with respect to the connexion between the qualities demanded in the preceding section of this part,—namely, high and pure views of what is just and expedient,—and those recommended in the present section,—namely, a firm and thorough-going discharge of all the rougher and more trying duties which offer themselves on the broad and prominent foreground of human life.

SECTION III.

DOCTRINE OF SMALL DUTIES.

LUKE xvi. 10. *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.*

WE have now said all that we think it important to state respecting the two first compartments into which we considered the great field of human duty as capable of being divided.

The first of these compartments contains that important portion of human duty which relates to the ideal;—and, in treating of this division, we have, especially, endeavoured to draw the attention of the reader to the importance of having a high and pure standard of excellence continually in his mind. We have also stated how admirably Christianity, by the

high character of its Founder, is fitted to correspond with this demand of our moral nature,—and we have, throughout the section, been especially urgent in stating the distinction which ought to be made between considering *perfection* as the *object* proposed to man, as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—and the very different doctrine which merely inculcates, that among the most important *modes* of accomplishing that object, the maintenance of pure and high moral feelings ought to claim a very prominent place. We scarcely think it necessary again to repeat,—though the mistakes that are universally current seem to justify the repetition,—that *the object* proposed to man is the due and zealous fulfilment of the duties of his appropriate place in life;—but that Nature has so constituted his mind, that, in the attaining of that object, he is powerfully assisted by the disposition which belongs to him, of working at all times after a high and ideal model,—always feeling that something better may be done by him, than at any moment he has been able to realize,—and thus led on in pursuit of his object by pure and high ideas of excellence,—which correspond most admirably with his own progressive and constantly-rising powers.

We felt it the more necessary to state this doctrine fully,—because the freedom with which we have treated the common idea, that *perfection* is the object proposed to man,—might have led superficial and hasty readers to mistake entirely the nature of our statement,—and to accuse us of a disposition to lower the demands made on our virtuous exertions to a level, on which we have not the least inclination to see them resting.

The second great compartment of the field of duty relates to the actual interests and rough contentions,—and severe labours of life;—the former compartment belongs strictly to the ideal world,—it is that high and pure region to which we are occasionally disposed to lift our eyes,—but which reveals itself to us only in aerial and dimly-discerned perspective,—though we feel, at the same time, that it is but a higher portion of that actual and visible world with which we are more directly or palpably connected. This second compartment is that which surrounds us in living and visible reality,—the objects of which are ever present and tangible,—which is varied by the strong colouring of daily life,—and where,—though there are lights and shadows,—and some objects in dazzling prominence, while others

are cast more into relief,—yet the whole has a direct relation to our common powers of perception and strongest capacities of enjoyment,—and determines, by the measure of our success in managing its concerns, the quantity of happiness we are destined, as inhabitants of this living and active scene, to command and to enjoy.

Our great endeavour, in treating of this compartment, has been to establish that it is chiefly by the manner in which we conduct ourselves in the discharge of the duties which it presents to us,—that our fidelity as subjects of the kingdom of God is determined,—that our high ideas of excellence must all be made instrumental in enabling us to pass through these more palpable concerns with energy and success,—and that the example of the Founder of Christianity is the most beautiful that ever has been given to the world, of the manner in which perfect purity of principle and feeling may be employed in the roughest contentions,—and made to support the most awful humiliations which life can offer.

We concluded this section by some remarks intended to show in what way the principles of the former section,—respecting the value of a high

standard of excellence, may be reconciled with those inculcated respecting the importance of a zealous discharge of actual concerns,—and endeavoured to show that the most perfect characters are those which unite these two excellencies,—or which, with much energy and perseverance in the conduct of affairs,—yet are disposed to manage these, in all instances,—on the most liberal and enlightened principles.

We are now arrived at the third compartment of the field of duty,—that which relates to *small duties*,—and what are commonly viewed as more evanescent and uninfluential interests. It may be imaged as that compartment of the whole field which corresponds,—though on the opposite side,—and by the contracted size of its objects,—with that which embraces the high and ideal objects of the first division. The actual and visible affairs of *human life* stand in the middle between these two;—and as, on the one hand, this middle region runs by imperceptible degrees into the high, and pure, and aerial objects of the ideal kingdom,—so, on the other, its strongly-marked prominences,—and its alternations of light and shade, pass by equally gradual changes into the dim,—and imperceptible,—and apparently unimportant objects of that world which we

love to imagine,—from the diminished size of its contents,—as properly *microscopic.*

Our idea of the *importance* of the objects which this compartment contains is, however, so decided, —and we are, moreover, so convinced that mankind are universally disposed to underrate the actual influence which these objects are capable of exerting on their most important interests,—that we intend to subject its minute and apparently fugitive concerns to at least as close and particular an examination as we have already bestowed on the objects of the two former divisions.

Indeed, we have no hesitation in affirming, that just notions respecting the influence of the objects comprised in this division of the field,—will go far to alter our whole conceptions respecting the best mode of accomplishing the object, on which, as subjects of the Divine kingdom, we are bent,—and, if properly apprehended, will open up views of exquisite beauty, —and of admirable adjustment,—in the constitution of nature and courses of Providence,—which will give a new aspect to our entire situation amidst the works of God,—and dispose us to labour in the duty prescribed to us,—with a more cheerful and invigorating feeling of the value and fine results of our task.

ERRONEOUS MODES OF THOUGHT ORIGINATING IN A MISAPPREHENSION OF THIS SUBJECT.

It cannot but have struck most reflecting minds with wonder,—that that department of human science which relates to the duties of life,—and the best mode of fulfilling them,—has been treated with less precision,—less method,—and altogether in a less satisfactory and scientific manner, than almost any of the other subjects of human study,—although it is obvious that it is, of all others, that portion of the field of knowledge which is most deserving of careful examination,—and respecting the proper mode of cultivating which the most exact, and satisfactory, and approved rules ought to be established.

Perhaps the chief reason of this is,—that the subjects which belong to this department,—that is to say, all that relates to the actual conduct of life, —and the mode of fulfilling the part assigned us as subjects of the kingdom of God,—has fallen almost exclusively into the hands of popular declaimers,—or of authors who possess little of that precision of thought which is required for the clear and scientific display of any subject of study. At least, what-

ever may be the qualifications of such workmen,—they have little disposition, from the objects at which they immediately aim,—to exhibit their topics in the most correct method,—or to trace their relation to each other on an extensive and well-adjusted plan. Two great evils have been the result of this.

In the first place,—the *mode* of accomplishing the object proposed to man has formed no part of the discussions of such expounders. They deal chiefly in two articles,—that is to say, either *general rules* relating to the conduct of life,—or *exhortations* to the zealous observance of these rules. Their rules, however, are not intended to point out the *manner* in which the duty of life may be performed,—they are but that duty itself broken down into general, and vague, and often unsatisfactory maxims. These declaimers are thus like venders of medicine,—who exhibit their wares in distinct masses,—and warmly exhort you to purchase their goods,—but as to how these goods are to be used by you,—or what is the best method of making them take effect on your constitution, they give no information.

And it is easy to see what are the temptations that have led preachers,—and other moralists, to this unsatisfactory and defective method of expound-

ing their doctrines;—for their object is not so much to give wide, and connected, and satisfactory views of the relations of the different duties of life, as to produce a *warm* and *impassioned feeling* in favour of virtue, in the minds of those to whom their exhortations or rules are addressed;—and this, it is evident, can best be done by the selection of *general topics*,—and by glowing descriptions of the *advantages* that will result from the practice of duty,—or of the *evils* that will be consequent on its neglect or violation.

Although, therefore, they often profess to give *rules* for the conduct of a good life,—yet these rules are the mere *materials* of virtue, made up into separate masses;—they are the *subject* itself of which you are to make use,—and their exhortations exhibit the *motives* which should induce you to avail yourself of it,—but they by no means point out the *mode* in which the material is to be best applied,—or enable you to understand, in a satisfactory manner,—how their wares are to produce the effect which they so warmly recommend. We repeat that it is virtue, or the materials of a good life itself,—under the form of general maxims,—which can be put in a captivating and easily-managed

form,—but not the *mode* of using those materials which their rules exhibit,—and that their exhortations to avail ourselves of these materials only offer *motives* for their employment, but still leave the grand question unsolved,—in *what way* these materials may be most beneficially used for the renovation of a diseased constitution, or for invigorating a system that is already in a course of amendment.

In the second place,—to all this these declaimers, or retailers of practical rules and exhortations, are led, as we have said, by their desire to produce instantaneous and glowing effects,—and by the limited time that, in the case of public declamation, is afforded the preacher for the exposition of his doctrines or precepts. But what we have now to state is, that while these teachers of practical virtue have left the *method* of employing their wares unexplained, the tendency of their vague and general declamations has been to lead men into very erroneous ideas of the *true method* in which these goods may be most beneficially and effectually used. For the vague and glowing declamations of the preachers or retailers of the practical rules and exhortations of virtue,—being addressed, by their

very nature,—and by the occasions which give rise to them,—to the *imagination* and feelings of their hearers,—a general tone is given to the fancy of men on all topics connected with morals and duty; —and hence, following up the short and general maxims of these teachers,—they paint to themselves at once the image of absolute and untainted perfection, towards which they believe it to be their duty to aspire,—and with any thing short of which they think they are culpable if they permit themselves to be for one moment satisfied. They hence tread under foot all progressive means of attaining their object,—and, believing that they have the idea of *absolute perfection* in their minds,—they see no reason why they should not by one grand step transport themselves,—as it were in a regenerated and new-born form,—into this spiritual paradise prepared for them on earth.

The two errors, in short, into which men are thus led, in their notions of duty,—are, in the first place,—that they set before their minds,—as their object of pursuit,—a mere *vague* and *general idea*, —instead of an object suited to their powers,—and which is actually attainable;—and,

In the second place,—they see no reason why

they should not realize this ideal excellence by *one* or a *few vigorous efforts*, instead of wasting their strength,—and exhausting their time, in a slow and gradual endeavour to gain a solid though less absolute degree of moral good.

All this, however, proceeds upon views which are quite inconsistent with the actual constitution of nature,—with the kind and measure of excellence which man is fitted to reach,—and with the gradual and progressive manner in which all the operations of nature and of Providence are conducted.

Now we have no better mode of removing all these erroneous apprehensions, or of showing the true constitution of nature as connected with the moral capabilities of man,—and especially of pointing out the progressive and often slow manner in which all changes of importance in his nature are accomplished,—than by drawing his attention closely to the consideration of the important influence of small things in the general plan of the Divine economy; —such a view will not fail to show him that nature consists not of unconnected parts, but is one whole, all the portions of which are linked in beautiful and most consistent harmony,—that though some parts of this grand whole rise prominently be-

fore him, and others seem to fall into shade,—the obscure and the prominent are equally parts of the scheme, and have equal influence in determining the combined movement,—that thus great apparent results are often seen, in daily life, to issue from events that, at the moment of their occurrence, seemed to promise no such important consequences, —and, generally, that the improvement of his nature can only be effected, in a rational and successful manner, by accommodating his plans to this constitution of nature,—that is to say, by setting before him an attainable and progressive good, and by seeking to realize it, not by *instantaneous* and *great* efforts, but by a wise application even of the smallest means, and by a gradual incorporation of constantly-improving habits with the general frame and constitution of his mind.

We shall accordingly proceed to evolve these ideas more fully in the succeeding subdivisions of this section. The importance which we attach to the subject, and the little attention that has been paid to it by moralists in general, and especially by the writers of our own country, must be our apology for the length to which the following illustrations, and the quotations which they imply, may extend. We

again express our conviction, that there is no subject whatever connected with the theory of moral duty that is so worthy of an attentive examination, or that is fitted to throw so many important and pleasing lights on the economy of nature as adapted to our moral improvement.

WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY SMALL AND GREAT THINGS WHEN DISCOURSING ON THIS SUBJECT.

The great view in which nature ought to present itself to us, when thinking on this subject, is that of a whole, finely connected and harmoniously arranged in all its parts,—some of these parts, however, appearing more prominent to our eye than others, and seeming to have a more direct influence upon the series of events through which our history leads us, —and others seeming to be placed more in the shade,—and to have but a distant or doubtful effect upon the things that befall us,—but still the obscure as well as the prominent making necessary parts of the entire scheme,—and only deriving a relative importance in our estimation from the differ-

ent degrees of certainty which we are capable of attaining in determining their influence.

This idea is accordingly well stated, by a continental author of the first rank among practical moralists, who has made this subject the theme of a separate treatise, entitled, "On the Importance of explaining more carefully, in Moral Discourses, the Influence which Small Things have on the Mind." We shall have occasion, in the sequel, to make copious extracts from this author,—and though he has broken the subject too much down by the many subdivisions which he has introduced into it,—and has, by the same means, rendered it difficult to give his whole meaning in any one extract of a moderate length, it is impossible to speak too highly of the merit of the work in other respects, nor is there any treatise that is more worthy of an attentive perusal.

The work commences in the following terms:—"Let us, in the first place," says our author, "endeavour to define the *notion* itself, that we may understand what things we consider as small or trifling when speaking on this topic. And here we may assume what has been more accurately proved, by those who have treated of the providence of the Deity, that all the parts of the universe were origi-

nally so disposed by its Author, and are still maintained by him, that *they have a fine and intimate connexion with each other, and are held together by fixed laws.* Nor, can it surprise any one, that, in this mutual relation and unbroken series of all the causes which have a place in nature, even the *least of these* should be taken account of by the Deity. Indeed the Divine knowledge could not be in all respects perfect and complete, unless it extended also to those things which appear of small moment to us,—unless it so viewed the series of events, that it had regard even to the efficacy of the least things, and wisely directed their force.

"But," continues our author, "this series and connexion of causes is sometimes *very obscure,* and so involved by nature itself, that it either altogether escapes our notice, or only some parts of the series can be discovered by us. A great many things seem to pass by us, and only touch the mind gently. For the mind, which is constantly prompted to pass forward to new notions, is then only disposed to stop its course, when it is either, as it were, *unwillingly detained* in the contemplation of some particular idea,—as when sickness,—or sorrow,—or some other passion thus violently stops the current of its

thoughts,—or when it perceives something which seems *worthy* of being observed, and which attracts and detains it by its beauty,—or novelty,—or admirable nature,—or by some other means. Now things are called *important* and *great*, which, in some way or other, detain the mind in its forward course, and cause it to stop and devote itself to contemplation and seriousness; and the things which have this power of turning the mind inward on itself and detaining it, are either, as we have said, those things which seem to have something in them that is new and worthy of notice, or things which are in some way or other related to our safety. Accordingly the degrees of this *importance* or *greatness* which we attribute to things are almost infinite, —and the attention we bestow on them corresponds so exactly with this importance, that the more of this quality, whether fictitious or real, we discover in any thing, the more devotedly do we pay our attention to it. But all other things are accounted *small and insignificant*, not because they are really unimportant, for we have said, that, in the order of nature, nothing is so constituted as not to have some influence on other things with which it is connected, but because they seem to us, from our igno-

rance or haste, to be of little consequence. We call those things *small*, then, *which have little or no power of drawing the attention of the mind,—that is to say, which are so constituted, that though they have an influence on the mind, or produce some change in it, yet that change is so small as not to be sufficient to draw observation to itself.*"

After illustrating this observation by some examples from ancient authors who have used the terms in this sense, the author proceeds, from this settlement of the *notion*, to an enumeration of the *kinds* or *orders* of those things which he has denominated small or unimportant,—and with that love of division for which he is remarkable, he proposes to speak, first, of things deserving this appellation which belong to external nature,—and, secondly, of those which are inherent in the mind itself. Each of these divisions he again subdivides,—and, with respect to external things, he states, that such trivial events sometimes occur *singly*,—sometimes several of them present themselves in *connexion*,—and sometimes they follow each other in a related series or *succession*. In proceeding to the illustration of the former of these,—that is, those which are taken

from the external world, he thus expresses himself with respect to those things which occur *singly*.

"We daily see and hear many things to which we pay little attention, because they but gently influence our thoughts, and are not so connected with other events as powerfully to move and interest us. For in the hurry with which we are constantly passing on towards new ideas and images, we attend but in a perfunctory manner, and, as it were, while doing something else, to those individual occurrences whose power is not sufficient to draw particular attention;—and these more obscure ideas are altogether neglected by those who have not been habituated to attend to the state of their own minds, and curiously to examine their changes. But it is not easy to say how much power these small matters often exercise over the thoughts, although they do not excite any violent emotion. For those persons are mightily deceived who think that such things have *no* influence on us, because they do not lay hold of the thoughts and draw them to themselves, or because their influence is not always very apparent. For who does not know that emotions are some-

times awakened in us of the causes of which we are ignorant,—that occasionally a depression and feebleness of mind is experienced, of the origin of which we can give no account,—that there is often a *tendency* towards some passion, such as anger,—sadness,—joy,—and so forth,—while we are unable to say what has caused such irritation in us,—and that sometimes a multitude of objects which we had formerly seen are suddenly called up before the mind, while we know not what can have given occasion to this sudden act of the conceptive faculty? These, and many similar effects, commonly proceed from that slight efficacy of external causes, of which, when they gently touch the mind, through the instrumentality of the senses, we cannot always give an account. This is chiefly observable in those who are addicted to some particular passion, such as the wrathful,—the voluptuous,—the avaricious, and others,—for such persons are commonly easily irritated by very small matters,—nor is there any thing in external nature so insignificant, provided only it have some affinity to their favourite vice, as to be incapable of affecting their diseased minds. Sometimes this power of external things, which only affect us gently when taken singly, becomes very ap-

parent when a number of them unite their influence. Thus, although there are many things which we see and hear singly, without receiving from them any perceptible affection, yet if, instead of being presented to us gradually and at intervals, they come upon us at once and in a body, they frequently produce emotions of much delight, and, as it were, steep us in joy."—So much with respect to external things of small apparent moment which occur singly.

"Of those things, also, which act *conjointly* upon us, the force is not always so perceptible as to draw great attention from us,—and to be studiously observed. The ideas of many things often glide into the mind together,—but so lightly, and, as it were, by stealth, that it is only the diligent and attentive student of his own feelings that can tell what exactly he has experienced. But the person who neglects this gentle,—sometimes even soothing and pleasant influence of images crowding upon his mind at the same time, deprives himself of many great incitements to virtue, or may be unconsciously overtaken by dangers, of which he had no suspicion. Who has not felt himself so influenced by the sight of

particular places,—by the calm solitude of a resting-place or retreat,—or, as the poet says,—'by the propitious silence of the quiet moon,'—by a multitude of other things, in short, placed around us,—as, by degrees, to feel his mind,—which before was unconscious of any such emotion,—raised to the contemplation of the Deity,—to the sense of many pious feelings,—and to the consciousness of a strong inclination to that which is good and praiseworthy? And the influence of conjoined circumstances is not less in disposing the mind sometimes to that which is evil;—for, by this influence, the unwary are sometimes led into levity,—petulance,—lasciviousness,—and other vices,—and gradually carried to a pitch of wickedness of which they previously had no suspicion that they were capable. This commonly happens, when some unforeseen opportunity of time and place awakens the purpose of vice in them,—and gives it a hold on their minds, which, without such influence from outward and unpropitious circumstances, would not have conceived any such evil intention. It is impossible to say how many crimes have had their origin in such circumstances,—and, under their influence, have been perpetrated by men, who, previously, did not sus-

pect themselves capable of such actions. Thus, sometimes, even good men, not sufficiently on their guard against the insinuating influence of external things, have unexpectedly committed actions,—from which they seemed, both to themselves and others, to have been the farthest removed. Who knows not how much the disposition of the mind is affected by a change of air and sky?—for our minds are disposed either to hilarity or sorrow very much according to the state of the weather. As a Greek author says,

"'Men take the colour of their minds from the hues which Jupiter sheds over the face of Nature.'

"Nor ought the influence which works of art,—with which we are daily conversant,—which we are in the habit of seeing and handling,—and to which we have become thoroughly accustomed,—are capable of exerting over the mind, to be here overlooked. For it is notorious,—and matter of daily experience,—that the sense of the beautiful is blunted by familiarity with imperfect and ill-executed works of art,—and that those who daily imbibe the vitious and depraved images of such things,—or, as Plato says,—'who are nourished by noxious food,'—derive many bad impressions from these external things,—and unconsciously contract a depraved

taste. Plato has treated this subject excellently in the third book of his 'Republic,' where he distinctly states, of how much importance it is to attend to these small things. Those, indeed, who have not reflected deeply on the nature of the human mind, are apt to think, that it matters little with what things men are surrounded;—what buildings,—clothes,—and furniture, they are conversant with;—what images are presented to their eyes in pictures,—statues,—and other works of art;—what kind of music they hear played,—what songs they sing,—what verses they commit to memory. But who does not perceive that these things *must* have an important influence on the mind, from the very circumstance of their being daily present to the eye,—and constantly contemplated? If these small things are of a bad kind, they *insensibly* corrupt the mind, so as to produce negligence, rustic stupidity, petulance, and rudeness, in the whole conduct. If, on the other hand, they are expressive of the 'good and the graceful,'—they nourish and strengthen the sense of beauty,—of consistency,—of order, in all our words and actions,—so that persons thus trained learn *unconsciously*, and almost without design, to distinguish, in every thing, what is fit and becoming, and

begin to love and to pursue it in all their conduct. Accordingly, Plato, in the above-mentioned passage, justly recommends, that, in the training of young persons,—great regard ought to be had to the external circumstances amidst which they are habitually placed,—so that, living as it were in a healthy atmosphere, they may receive good impressions from all quarters,—and something may constantly be brought to their eyes or ears from the excellent productions of the masters of art,—which, like a genial breeze, wafting health from salutary places, may, even from their earliest years, gradually dispose them to be in love and agreement with every thing that is conformable to Nature and truth."

"Finally, a *succession* of external things, and a continued series of certain changes, have also, as we observed, this effect, that they touch the mind sometimes but slightly, yet exercise a most fatal power over him who is not aware of their influence,—and despises their first approaches. In this way, certain perturbations of mind are generated,—which unexpectedly attain to such a height, that the irritated fancy can neither restrain itself, nor stop where

it wishes. For when, being slightly affected by some external change, you neglect the first attack, and permit the emotion, however slight, to be awakened, the agitation is increased by every new application,—and, at last, becomes so violent, that the excited fancy is deprived of all power of restraining itself, and rushes headlong to ruin. This gradual increase,—proceeding from slight causes, is especially perceptible in the case of irritable persons. Often a shake of the head,—or a look betraying some disrespect, leaves a slight wound in the fancy. If a contemptuous smile be added, the concealed indignation acquires an increase of fury. Let jests be uttered, and you irritate immeasurably the passion of the angry person. Finally, let one spiteful word be uttered, and the passion overleaps all restraint,—and rages with unmitigable fury. And those persons are particularly liable to such paroxysms, who have a natural tendency to pride,—or who have spent their lives in easy and voluptuous circumstances. The same thing may be said of love. It is commonly awakened by trifles,—is nourished by trifles,—and altogether, as is well known,—delights in noticing small words,—and trifling causes. And, with respect to this passion

especially, the power of trifling causes is conspicuous in awakening suspicions, which, when once excited, receive much additional force from very small things. All this may be observed in those who are disposed to be jealous. For there is nothing which the beloved person can do,—or say,—or undertake,—or omit;—there is no expression, even, which can be given to the countenance,—which the jealous person will not use for confirming his suspicions, and adding to the agony of his own mind. He takes every thing as an indication of contempt, and quite the reverse of what it was, perhaps, intended to be;—he gives a perverse interpretation to all expressions of conduct,—and always believes himself to be neglected."

"We pass by many other things which might be advanced on this subject,—because we conceive it must be evident, from what has been said, that external things, sometimes taken singly, sometimes in connexion, often so affect the mind, that their influence seems to the heedless to be but trifling and small,—while, to those who would instruct others in an effective manner, respecting the laws of good conduct,—that influence will appear to be deserving of the most serious notice and regard."

Thus far our Author, respecting those small things which have their place among *external* objects, and influence the mind only from its connexion with the visible and tangible frame of things. His illustrations are, no doubt, too much broken down,—from a habit of subdivision and of orderly arrangement, which, as we learn from a very interesting memoir of his life and studies, written by himself, was peculiar to him from his infancy,—and influenced all his compositions,—and which was probably strengthened by his familiarity with those kinds of didactic discussion which form the most approved models of the preacher, and lecturer on the elements of philosophical knowledge. The same minute division is accordingly carried by him into the remaining observations respecting those small causes, which have their place in the *mind itself*;—and, in general, we may observe, that though this habit of subdivision, or of breaking down a thought, which is in its nature one and entire, may occasionally be used with advantage,—and may especially be admitted, when topics not familiar to ordinary minds are brought under their notice,—it is, however, a habit which will not apply with advantage to all topics,—and ought to be restrained when the subject

is of a kind which properly exists as *a whole*,—or is best seen in its true features when all its component and living parts are presented in one connected and well-ordered assemblage. This observation is worthy the attention of those who are professionally engaged in the communication of theological or philosophical knowledge,—and by whom the just proportions of their subjects are often violated,—and the effect of their discourses diminished, by the fragmentary and insulated form in which the different members are presented to the hearers,—instead of being exhibited in that entire and well-grouped perfection of parts, which belongs to them in their actual and living state.

We cannot afford space for the introduction of all that our Author has said respecting the different orders of small causes which have their place in the mind itself;—for, with his usual love of arrangement and subdivision, he has treated first of the influence of *single* ideas,—then of *opinions* or *judgments* composed of them,—after that, of the *affections*, or first symptoms of passion to which they give origin, —and, lastly, of the *general state* of the mind itself, under the habitual influence of such small and secret impressions. His remarks, indeed, though thus

broken down, are, in every instance, instructive and valuable;—but we shall translate only those which relate to the two first topics,—as being the sections which seem to us to contain the best illustrations from fact,—and to be most suited for exhibiting the influence of small causes, in a striking manner, to the minds of our readers.

"But some things," continues our Author, "lurk in the mind itself, and are brought out during its agitations, which are commonly reckoned unimportant,—and whose influence those who treat of moral discipline often too much neglect. It is necessary, therefore, that we should now notice some things of this nature.

"And, in the first place, there are in us a great multitude of obscure ideas, of which the mind, being unable to embrace many things at once, is little conscious. Of these there are two modes,—First, *there are those which neither at their first occurrence, nor during their repetition, can be made so clear and distinct, that they can be separated from the others with which they are associated.* Not a few are imperfect in their very first occurrence. A vast

number of these have their origin in the body, by whose changes the mind is variously moved and affected, although often so slightly and obscurely, that it is scarcely distinctly conscious of what it feels. For not only does the body occasion those greater tumults and paroxysms, of which the ancients took frequent notice, but its diseased and restless nature fills us with an almost infinite multitude of small sensations, which, although they indeed *touch* the mind, yet are for the most part imperceptible, and have no distinct character. Of these, modern authors have begun to treat more accurately,—and especially Leibnitz. Sometimes the obscurity of ideas arises from this, that the *memory* has gradually allowed them to pass away,—and does not reproduce them in their full and absolute character. These, indeed, can seldom be restored, or regain their first distinctness, yet their *power* is not altogether lost,—and sometimes they act more energetically than others which possess all their first clearness.

"A second class contains those obscure ideas which can indeed be recalled, and are retained entire in the memory, but which, when the mind is busied with other things, retire as it were into the shade.

This class is very extensive, and contains all those ideas which are laid up in the mind, except such as are the immediate subjects of attentive thought. But as the mind is in perpetual activity, and possesses incredible rapidity of thought,—and as, in this progress of its ideas, it neither moves altogether at random, nor passes on to certain ideas as it were by a leap, but rather proceeds by a definite path, along which it is led by ideas which are related to each other by a certain connexion and affinity,—it often happens that this *progress is made towards new thoughts along obscure ideas*, which are distinguished and enlightened either by no radiance whatever, or by a very faint glimmering. Accordingly, we are often unable to say in what way, or by what means, we have been led to thoughts which seem to have no relation to those that preceded them. And, generally, the whole of human life is made up of this variety of notions,—some of which are distinct and others obscure,—but all of which are related to each other, and held together by a definite connexion. Now, who does not see that it must be of great importance to have the mind made sensible of such transitions? For, in the first place, *ignorance* of this connexion is favourable

to *superstition*, and has led many persons,—from their inability to conceive how certain notions, altogether unlike those which had preceded them, had come into their minds,—to attribute such changes either to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, if they are persons of a pious turn,—or to the deceits of the devil, if they are impious and hardened persons. And who can tell how many fanatics have thus been produced,—how many illusions of fancy have disturbed the human race,—finally, how many men, believing themselves to be tempted by the devil, have suffered, from this belief, the greatest mental agonies? In the last place, as the workings of the mind are of two kinds,—it being occupied either with thoughts or with affections,—these obscure ideas, especially if they are slight sensations, originating in the body, sometimes awaken affections,—and hurry the mind to action. And thus sparks of desire begin to be kindled,—the origin of which we are often altogether unable to trace; —and thus, too, the mind is sometimes affected with paroxysms, the causes of which lie concealed. These things, indeed, are small, and easily withdraw themselves from the observation of the unskilful,—but he who overlooks them is often deprived

of self-command, and hurried on to crimes;—for he is not likely either to preserve the peace of his mind, —or to maintain the virtue which he has acquired, if he is unacquainted with the secret artifices of his own thoughts, and with the more remote lurking places in which they take refuge. It is proper, therefore, that men should be often exhorted to examine themselves, and to observe the slightest movements of their minds, that, when such things occur, —they may know how to treat them."

"What has been said respecting *single notions* may be transferred to those opinions and *acts of the judgment* which sometimes have a secret place in our minds; and although they influence our conduct, are yet *unconsciously* employed by us. Some of these opinions are gained in infancy, and almost taken in by us with our mother's milk;—others are produced while our reasoning powers are but imperfect,—and are incapable of forming an accurate conclusion respecting what is true and just in things. Such opinions, however, formed into groups in more mature age, take entire possession of the mind, and can neither be effaced nor removed;

—hence the attention of the mind, by long custom, is withdrawn from such judgments, nor do we reckon them among the things which deserve our notice. It hence happens that we are daily doing many things from no distinct impression,—but rather under the influence of those *obscure opinions* which have gradually acquired strength. Nor is reason able to overthrow the influence of opinions thus early formed by the mind, and strengthened by length of time. We thus often wonder how it happens that no effect is produced either on ourselves or others by the most weighty arguments. We are sometimes indignant that we cannot give our full assent to persons who seem to advise only what is most just and useful, because we feel ourselves to be restrained by some *obscure feeling*, which can be borne down by no weight of arguments. Here, however, we trace the operation of those obscure opinions which we have previously formed. It is they which cause, that though we are pleased with the just representations which are made to us, and regard them as worthy of our assent, yet we cannot wholly admit them,—or give them entire possession of our minds,—because a contrary conviction has too much influence over us,—and has become al-

most incorporated with our habitual trains of thought.

"To these *judgments* or *opinions* it is also to be attributed that the mind is sometimes the slave of certain emotions and perturbations,—whose influence is such,—that though we see the folly of them, and smile at their absurdity,—yet we feel ourselves unable wholly to overcome and extirpate them. Such is the belief in invisible agency,—or of the appearance of spectres,—haunting solitary places,—making loud and terrific noises,—and hostile to mankind. Those, indeed, who in their childhood give full credit to such stories, easily are made to understand, when their judgment has been matured, that all such appearances are but imaginary,—or have proceeded from the artifices of men;—yet reason alone is seldom, or perhaps never, able completely to destroy the influence of our earliest belief. For such is its influence through life,—that persons who have been subject to it in youth almost involuntarily shudder, and seem to perceive their early imaginations realized, when they are forced to visit dark, retired, and haunted places,—that is, places become infamous in popular tradition. All who have at former periods of their lives been tainted with this

fear will acknowledge the truth of what we say,—and we ourselves, who now write this account, have felt it in our own persons.

"Not unfrequently even our sense of the beautiful or becoming is affected by these obscure and inveterate opinions. For the various and discordant opinions of men concerning things honourable or base,—and generally respecting those things which are said to be becoming, fit, or graceful, are almost uniformly to be traced to previously formed judgments, which, although they have been gradually overwhelmed as it were by other thoughts, so that they seem almost to have entirely vanished, yet have already given such a cast to the tender and susceptible mind, that it can scarcely ever be altered or corrected. It has been said, with some appearance of justice, that no man ever yet existed, without a certain portion of *madness* in his composition. It is at least certain, that the feelings, manners, and habits of almost every person are different in some respects from the prevailing taste,—and that there is no one who has not his own humour in some things. This madness, however, which is peculiar, in some things, to every person, flows commonly from those obscure opinions, which the youthful mind rashly

adopted, and had been accustomed to act upon, long before it had learned to judge correctly.

"Nor are these obscure opinions peculiar only to the youthful mind. For even when advanced in years, we unconsciously derive something from our intercourse with others, and from the things which we see and hear,—which takes firm hold of the mind,—and depraves it by hurtful opinions. It is impossible to say how far the *example* of those whom we love,—or esteem,—or venerate, may go in forming the habits of our minds. By means of their manners or their modes of acting, it naturally happens that many opinions secretly make their way into our minds, and corrupt, in various ways, the unskilful or inattentive observers of their own motives. Accordingly, Seneca has well said, 'That there is scarcely any person from whom we may not derive some vice,—or unconsciously gain some bad impresssion. A voluptuous guest by degrees enervates and softens us. A rich neighbour awakens covetousness,—a malicious companion rubs off ingenuousness from the most sincere and simple-minded.' All these things are commonly reckoned *small* or unimportant."

To these long extracts we have only to add, that we by no means answer for the appropriateness of all the examples which the author has produced,—or subscribe to his philosophy in every instance in which he has proposed a solution of the appearances he has mentioned. We are rather disposed to think, that a different,—and in some instances a much more philosophical and simpler explanation might be given of some of the particular facts to which he has drawn attention. All that we intend, by these extracts, is to give the reader a notion of the *sort of things* to which the appellation of small or unimportant, in the course of this discussion, is to be applied,—and to point out some of the classes into which they may be distributed;—and for this purpose we could scarcely have chosen a better guide than the very distinguished and excellent author from whose work,—written expressly with this view, the preceding quotations have been made.

It matters little whether the individual illustrations be in every case just and well-selected, provided they give a distinct notion of the class of objects to which they relate; for this is all that we

aimed at in making these extracts, and we consider it of far more importance that the attention of the reader should be strongly drawn to such objects as actually existing,—than that he should merely be presented with an enumeration of them which accords in every particular with the justest rules of classification or of philosophical arrangement.

With this remark we pass on to the remaining portions of the subject,—our notice of which shall be conducted in a more summary manner.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE PLAN OF MORAL PROGRESS SUGGESTED BY THE PRECEDING OBSERVATIONS,—AND THE ACTUAL LAWS OR ARRANGEMENTS OF NATURE.

In introducing these miscellaneous remarks,—we again request the attention of the reader to the observation with which we commenced the preceding illustration,—namely,—that mankind have shown a strong disposition to commit two great mistakes, in their attempts at improving their nature, and fulfilling their duty with propriety.

The first of these mistakes consists in their disposition to set before them *too high* an object as the re-

sult of their labour;—an object, indeed, which they cannot attain,—and which is merely the creation of their own vague and unregulated powers of fancy and of abstraction. It is, in short, perfection,—absolute and unlimited perfection,—and nothing short of this,—or having any definite relation to the capacities of human nature, as it actually exists, or to the circumstances of the human condition, as these have been arranged by Providence,—that men are disposed to set up as the point towards which their endeavours after the improvement of their nature are directed;—and,

In the second place,—and by a natural consequence of this first mistake,—they are as much disposed to realize their object by *one* or a *few* vigorous efforts,—and to become "regenerated in the spirit of their minds,"—not by any slow process, conformable with the ordinary operations of Nature and of Providence,—but by an instantaneous transformation of all their principles,—and an entire new direction impressed on all their hopes and feelings. And this error, we have said, is the natural result of the preceding;—for, as the object which men set before them has no definite relation to any actually existing condition, either of their own powers or of the ar-

rangements of Nature,—but is simply an abstraction or fiction of their own minds,—there is no reason why, as they have the power of conceiving at once such an object, which is entirely of their own creation, they should not also be in a condition, if they have but the requisite resolution, to appropriate their own notion, by an absolute effort of their will, to themselves;—and thus,—overleaping all steps and gradations of progress,—by one or a few vigorous strides, to transport themselves from the mixed and thorny path of common life, into the perfect beauty, and unmingled felicity of that spiritual, though still earthly paradise, which their own fancies have called into existence for their enjoyment.

These are the errors into which the human imagination is prone to fall on this subject,—and by which the actual apprehensions and endeavours of mankind, in their labours after the improvement of their nature, are obviously vitiated,—and rendered fantastical;—and, in opposition to these, the two great principles which we lay down on this subject, and to the illustration of which we wish all our observations to be directed,—are the following:—

First,—That, in order to improve our nature effectually, and on the best plan,—that is,—in the

manner most conformable to the order of Nature, we must pay a sacred regard to even the *smallest duties* which our situation presents to us,—and must be as unwilling to neglect these, as to misimprove those that carry an air of more importance;—and,

Secondly,—That it is not simply by *insulated* endeavours to improve any of the events, whether apparently small or great, which befall us,—that our real progress in good conduct can be secured,—but by a *continued use* of such means,—gradually incorporating them with our habitual principles of thought,—and giving them the direction of all our rules of action,—imperceptibly, in short, but surely transferring them into the very texture of our nature,—and into the daily course of our lives.

These are the principles which we lay down,—and to which we are most anxious that the attention of the reader should be drawn,—because we are satisfied, that a clear apprehension of their use and importance,—will not only go far to render his future progress in good conduct easy and cheerful,—but will alter to a very great extent his whole previously-conceived notions respecting the object prescribed to man,—and the best mode of directing his

endeavours to the attainment of that object. It will also, if we are not greatly mistaken, throw a new and beautiful light over the whole economy of Nature, as related to that purpose,—and will dispose the man, who formerly turned with averted looks from the asperities and impracticable nature of his path, to enter on it with a heart sincerely disposed to the object in view,—and with all his natural affections cheering him in the way along which he feels it to be not only his duty, but his interest and his pleasure to proceed.

For the first general remark to which we think it important to call the attention of the reader on this subject is,—that the plan of improvement we have now pointed out and defined by the two rules just given,—is the only one that is in accordance with the arrangements of Nature,—the only one, consequently, that is really practicable,—while the common errors upon this subject are the result merely of a delusive abstraction,—and lead only to vague and unavailing efforts.

The laws, or general description of the order of Nature, to which we have now referred, may be classed under the four following heads:—

In the first place,—that all the arrangements of

Nature are connected,—or that the whole is one scheme;—so that the distinction between great and little, which we make in its particular arrangements, is only a work of our own fancy,—but is not descriptive of the actual efficiency which these parts may have in the evolution of her results.

In the second place,—and as a necessary consequence of this connexion,—that small,—that is, *apparently* small causes, are often found in experience to give rise to the most important consequences;—and this observation, or law, which must have forced itself on the notice of every man,—both from observation of the events that take place on the great theatre of the world,—and from the more interesting consideration of his own past life,—ought to have been sufficient to teach us,—that the plan of Providence or Nature *is* one and entire,—and that her least important means are equally deserving of our attention and cultivation with the most apparently efficacious.

In the third place, and also quite consistent with the preceding deductions,—is the law, that the issues of Nature are commonly brought about, not by instantaneous efforts,—or by starts,—but by a *quiet* and *regular progress*, according to established

means,—and without the slightest neglect of any of the intermediate steps which she has ordained as leading to the result. This, also, is an obvious consequence of the entireness or simplicity of the order by which all the arrangements of Nature are connected into one whole;—and it follows from this law,—that it is folly to expect any good which we may conceive it desirable to realize, but by a careful and diligent use of the means which Nature has provided for the direction of men in attaining that good.

In the last place,—that man himself is properly not something distinct from Nature,—or merely a spectator and employer of her means,—but a *part* of the vast order in which he holds his place,—and subject, in all the changes of his nature, to the same laws which govern the rest of the system. Hence the qualities, either good or bad, which characterize his nature,—are, in every case, the result of *habits* which have been progressively gained,—and can only be removed by an opposite process,—slowly,—but steadily carried on; and it follows from this obviously just statement,—that *he* is acting on a plan which can bring him nothing but disappointment,—who thinks, in any important respect, to alter

the actual state of his nature in any other way but by a careful endeavour gradually to eradicate evil propensities or habits which already "beset him,"—and, by a corresponding steadiness of purpose,—to replace these evil weeds by plants of a more healthful and useful nature.

All this we consider as a just and obvious account of the actual procedure and ordinary course of Nature;—but in direct contravention of all this is the conduct of the man who is striving after a vague standard of perfection,—and who seeks to realize his purpose by one or a few violent efforts.

For to him Nature and all her arrangements are nothing. It is something altogether distinct from Nature,—it is an *abstraction* of his own mind,—and belonging solely to an ideal world,—that occupies his thoughts. *Small causes*, consequently, are of no avail in his estimation, and their use forms no part of his plan. A *slow* and *gradual* progress towards his end has no conformity with the purely spiritual and insulated nature of the object which he is seeking to realize;—and as to *habits*,—his project is not to extirpate them,—in the only way in which habits, from their very nature, can be overcome,—but, by one strenuous effort, to cut them up, "root and branch."

All this, however, though very descriptive of the plan commonly pursued,—has no relation to the actual order of life,—or to the beautifully-arranged, and finely-progressive procedure of Nature,—and it cannot but happen, consequently, that the labour or vain longings to which this plan gives occasion,—should all be as "strength spent for nought."

And it is hence, as we apprehend, that in fact so few men are seen to realize any perceptible portion of progressive worth,—by all their attempts to become better,—and to render their nature more conformable to the will of God.

SOME CONSEQUENCES THAT SEEM TO FOLLOW FROM THE PRECEDING REMARKS RELATING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL THINGS IN OUR MORAL PROGRESS.

It seems to follow, in the first place, from what has been said respecting the value of small means in our moral progress,—and respecting the slow and gradual procedure of Nature in the evolution of her results,—that there is a kind of indolence at the bottom of the unwillingness which men show to conform themselves to this procedure, and of their

disposition to aim at great issues only by violent and few efforts. And in one view, indeed, there seems to be more labour and patience demanded for the improvement of our nature by a slow and progressive endeavour to avail ourselves of such means as are offered by the daily occurrences of life, than for the attainment of this object by an instantaneous and violent rooting up of all former habits, and an equally instantaneous transporting of ourselves into a new region of perfect beauty and unmingled good. But the truth is, that, in the apprehension of this comparative difficulty, there is a delusion practised on the mind by itself,—and founded on a most erroneous estimate of the actual effects which these opposite plans produce. For, in point of fact, the only result of the common mode is to generate "unavailing longings," and a constant sighing after a good which is never, by all our longings, brought one degree nearer our possession,—while, by the other plan, we are cheered by the constant experience of the real progress which we are daily making,—and instead, consequently, of engaging us in a painful toil, this plan only makes our whole course of duty a series of most delightful and constantly-increasing satisfactions.

It follows, from the preceding views, in the second place, that there is a merit, and one too of a high order, in being satisfied with small advantages and poor means of progress, when Nature and Providence have not put more promising means within our reach. In the ordinary affairs of life, it is good and laudable, when we cannot husband great opportunities, to busy ourselves contentedly in the due use of such things as we are able to improve;—and he who is not permitted by his situation to realize a fortune, does well, and gains the applause of all observers, if he cheerfully and steadily devotes himself to the careful employment of the small advantages that may, even in the slightest degree, better his condition, or promote his comfort;—if, when he cannot purchase a more splendid mansion, or surround his abode with the elegancies of cultivation, he yet is happy and industrious in making his "humble cottage" as tenantable as it can be made,—and in adorning it with those simpler beauties which are suited to its character. And, in the same manner, if we cannot realize great attainments in virtue, it is meritorious to improve, with all our might, such opportunities as are actually offered to us by our own powers, and by the place which we occupy

among the servants of God,—that is to say, if we cannot attain to high fervours of devotion, or to an enthusiastic attachment to great public objects, to be at least cheerfully attentive to our domestic concerns, and to take care that our own hearts be kept "without spot, and blameless before God."

And hence it follows, in the third place, from the same general views, that there is neither wisdom nor advantage in being too much cast down because we sometimes fail in our purpose of being what we wish to be, or because we cannot altogether overcome many sins and temptations that belong to our present and mixed condition. Those who are constantly aiming at abstract perfection of purpose and feeling, are necessarily much exposed to this species of misery;—and perhaps there are few well-disposed men who have not experienced this evil in themselves, and seen it committing great ravages on the enjoyment of life in the case of others, whose views of duty have not been formed on the best model. We by no means urge that any species of infirmity should be viewed with satisfaction, but we insist that there is sometimes even vice in the distress which sensitive minds cherish on the experience of such failures as cannot be altogether and at all

times removed from any lot of man;—and that just views of duty, or of the object proposed to us, and of the means established by nature for the attainment of it, would lead us, when we have so failed, not to nourish a grief which only enfeebles the mind, and unfits it for future progress, but to see only the unavoidable imperfection of the human condition, and to advance with a more vigilant eye, and a determination made more steadfast by past experience, on that progressive path which is ultimately to lead us to our desired point.

Another observation of importance on this subject is derived from the daily conduct and experience of those who are most successful in pursuing the mere temporal emoluments which this world offers. The observation is this, that, as in the pursuit of wealth, or indeed of any other of the good things of this life, —it is universally admitted, that more is ultimately gained by him who is careful to husband small means, and to lose no opportunity, however apparently insignificant, of bettering his condition,—than by the man who disdains small accumulations, and sets his heart only on great objects, and on the exhibition of violent efforts;—so, in the progress of virtue, a much further point will ultimately, in every case, be found

to have been reached by him who has sedulously cultivated small and constantly-recurring means,—and who has valued "all virtue and all praise" even in their most humble forms,—than by the man who, without this attention to daily progress, has sought only to realize, by a few grand efforts, that perfect purity of imagination and conduct, which only he believes can entitle him to be considered as a successful servant of God.

In the last place, there is not only no incompatibility, but the most perfect accordance between that love of the ideal which we recommended in the commencement of this part of the Work, and that careful attention to small means of improvement which we have now been enforcing,—insomuch, that he who has the highest and purest moral taste,—the finest notions of the heights to which human nature may attain, will also have the justest perception, and be disposed to set the greatest value on the importance, of the smallest opportunities of well-doing that may come in his way,—or, in the beautiful words of our Lord, which, in this case, are capable also of a converse application,—"*He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much*,"—and he who is conscientiously devoted to

the discharge of important duties, will be equally attentive to the fulfilment of the smallest offices.

This important subject of "fidelity in small matters" has engaged the attention of many of the most eloquent moralists of modern times,—and Fenelon, in particular, in his *Oeuvres Spirituelles*, has written a valuable section on this topic. No modern author, however, has illustrated the subject more powerfully or beautifully than Zollikoffer, whose illustrations, indeed, of the whole series of human duties are conducted in the most valuable and delightful spirit,—and with the following extracts from one of whose most valuable discourses, we shall conclude these remarks:—

After noticing, in conformity with the preceding observations, "that he who *would be and do more* than he can be and do, or he who would be and do *all at once* what he is only able to become and to perform by slow degrees, generally is and does nothing, —or, at any rate, much less than according to his capacities and circumstances he might be and do,"—the author proceeds to illustrate his position, first, with respect to the different talents of men,—secondly,

with respect to their different stations in the world, —thirdly, in reference to the duties which these stations embrace,—and, lastly, with respect to the enjoyments that are put in our power by the various provisions of nature for our happiness. We quote the following passages from the third and fourth of these divisions:—

Speaking of the various duties assigned men by their different stations in life, he thus proceeds:— "If one be called to rule over a whole people, an entire kingdom,—another is appointed to govern a small municipal society,—and a third, a much smaller domestic circle. If one be employed in the most important affairs of government, another has a small spot of ground to cultivate, or some inferior trade to pursue. If one labours at the improvement of the age in which he lives, or provides for the instruction of his fellow-subjects,—another follows commerce, or practises some art,—a third furnishes us with habitations,—a fourth supplies us with provisions,—a fifth with the various accommodations and elegancies of life. If the occupations of the one call for greater exertions of mind, those of the other are more fatiguing to the body. If the one provides more for the gross,—for the connexion and re-

gulation of the whole, the other attends more to the detail,—to some one particular fraction of the whole. The occupations of mankind are thus extremely numerous and diversified. Their dignity and their importance, any more than their influence and their consequences, are not the same. But all may manage and attend to them, well or ill, in a laudable or a disgraceful manner: the greatest and most important may be neglected, and the least and most insignificant be discharged with honourable fidelity. And on this *fidelity* almost every thing depends.

"If, therefore, thou appliest thyself with conscientious fidelity to the instruction and promotion of the few scholars and pupils that are now intrusted to thee, so wilt thou hereafter be qualified for becoming the teacher and guide of larger societies, and for labouring with the same faithfulness in the enlargement of the kingdom of truth and of virtue among the full-grown, as at present among 'thy little ones.'—If, in the quality of a father of a family, thou maintainest discipline and order, peace and concord in thy house, and rulest all thy inmates with impartiality, with discretion and kindness, so wilt thou also, if called to it, be an impartial judge of the people, a faithful magistrate and overseer of

thy fellow-subjects.—If thou managest honestly the little that thy friends, that widows and orphans intrust to thee, thou wilt also manage honestly greater property in public offices,—even the whole revenues of the state.

"Hast thou, then, in pursuance of thy calling and connexions with others, only to do with comparatively small matters,—hast thou only seemingly trifling concerns to transact, let not this mislead thee to negligence. Be careful, be faithful, be conscientious in that which thou hast to do, however slight and mean it may be. This will render thee as intelligent and good, as accomplished and capable hereafter, whether in the present or in the future world, to undertake and execute more important matters, as though thou hadst already been employed in offices of this sort."

The following passage on the cheerful use even of the smallest satisfactions of life is too important to be omitted,—and will form an appropriate conclusion of these observations.

"Even pleasures and amusements," observes our author, "are goods intrusted to us,—gifts and presents from the great Sovereign of the world,—the use whereof is by no means indifferent,—and in the

indulgence and employment of which fidelity and integrity are required. To be sensible to the value of the pleasures and amusements of life,—to indulge in them with cheerfulness and gratitude,—to enjoy them under a lively sense of the goodness of God, the supreme Dispenser of joy,—to be excited by them to delight in his love, to obey his commandments, to trust in his providence,—to a liberal affection towards all mankind,—to the willing discharge of every duty,—this is to use them *faithfully*,—and he who does this in little, renders himself capable of doing it in great things.

"Yes; he does not best prepare himself for the blessings and felicities of the future life, who contemplates all that surrounds and befalls him on its gloomy side,—who seems, on all hands, to find causes of discontent and complaint,—and goes joyless and sad about the beautiful world of God. How can this be a preparation for superior blessings? No; he alone prepares himself for these aright who readily discovers the traces of Divine bounty on all sides,—who feels himself everywhere encompassed and overflowed with the benefits of his Creator and Father,—as with his light and air,—and who does not even overlook or turn in disdain

from such single, scattered flowers as he may chance to meet with on his path, because he cannot always range in flowery fields, or delight himself in gardens enamelled with various dyes, and breathing a profusion of odours.

"Wouldst thou, then, in this respect be faithful, and qualify thyself for greater things,—rejoice in all the good that thou art, and hast, and canst do, however little and insignificant it may appear to others,—rejoice in every recreation, every amusement that falls to thy share;—learn to rejoice in every flower of the field,—every living creature,—every reasonable being;—enjoy the flavour of the simplest food,—the quiet and security of thy humble cottage,—the repose of thy unadorned couch,—the confidential love of thy few intimates and friends,—the commonest beauties of nature,—enjoy them as cheerfully, as gratefully, as perhaps but few of the rich and great enjoy their choice viands,—the accommodations and elegancies of their splendid palaces,—the decorations of their bedchambers,—the respect and services of their numerous attendants, and the most curious productions of art."

"Look in all things up to God, from whom all good gifts proceed,—consider and enjoy them all as

benefactions,—as pledges of thy heavenly Father's love,—so wilt thou be happy amidst the most comparatively scanty means of enjoyment,—and capacitate thyself for greater, and purer, and constantly-increasing felicity in the world to come."

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION OF THIS PART.

It may now be useful,—lest some readers should not be able to perceive how the different rules presented in this third part of the Work hang together, and mutually accord with each other,—to bring together, in a few words, the train of remark by which the three sections of which it is composed are pervaded.

We considered the great field of human duty, it will be recollected, as divided into three portions,—the first being that elevated and more aerial portion, in which our ideas of what is excellent, and pure, and perfect have their scope;—the second comprising that visible and tangible portion, in which are contained the common interests, and daily occupations, and never-ceasing labours of man;—and the last occupied with those minuter and more evanescent

duties, which, though equally parts of the entire plan of nature, yet seem to us, from the obscurity in which they are placed, or the diminutive size which they assume, to be but of little or accidental consequence, in so far as the great "issues of life are concerned."

Now, with respect to the first of these portions we recommended, and indeed stated as necessary for all real progress in virtue, that the man who would carry his nature to its highest point, or fulfil, in the most efficient manner, the task prescribed to him amidst the duties of life, must have a high standard in his eye;—in other words, his moral feelings,—his perceptions of what is good, and just, and fine,—must be of a sensitive, and correct, and steady kind;—this is, commonly, said to be aiming at perfection;—but we have used the recommendation in a lower, and, as we venture to believe, a juster sense,—as expressive only of the *high model* after which we are presumed to work, or of the pure and warm tone which our individual feelings of what is excellent have assumed;—and we have represented Christianity as peculiarly entitled to our regard, from the efficacy of its provisions in this respect,—it having set before us the highest of

all standards in the person and character of him who bore the title of "the Son of God."

In turning our attention to the second portion of the field of human duty,—that which comprises the daily interests and labours of life,—we have stated that our feeling of what is excellent and pure,—so necessary for guiding us into a high path of virtue, must not, however, be permitted to gain such an ascendency as to make us neglect or despise the rough and boisterous contentions which life presents to all who engage in its duties;—that, on the contrary, these must always be regarded as, in the strictest of all senses, the field of contest, by our success in which our honours are to be gained,—but that while we cherish this belief, we must by no means value life simply for the *apparent success* which has attended our labours,—nor think those the best servants of God who have passed through this world amidst the fewest trials, and with the most prosperous circumstances,—but those rather who, amidst great contentions, have so conducted themselves in all respects, as to have evinced the greatest share of good conscience and of firm integrity,—so as to make all events conspire to themselves for final good.

The pure and fine ideas of excellence recommended in the first section are, therefore, to be regarded as but *helps* for enabling us to pursue our way, amidst harsh and depressing duties, with greater certainty of success,—and with a loftier and steadier aim.

In the last place,—we have recommended a strict attention to the smallest duties,—and a persevering endeavour to improve our nature by incorporating all accessions of good with the habitual tone of our thoughts and conduct;—and our high feeling of what is excellent,—the pure and lofty standard we are supposed to set before us will have the effect,—not, assuredly, of making us despise or overlook such small means,—but of rendering us more sensitive to their impressions,—and more disposed to use them with effect. Although, therefore, we insist much on the importance of attending to small duties or means of improvement,—we are as urgent respecting the value of high and pure feelings of the good which is competent to our condition;—while, at the same time, we consider these feelings as only or chiefly valuable by giving a high tone to our daily labours amidst the rougher contentions and conflicting interests of life.

There is one observation, however, applicable to the whole of this subject, which ought not to be overlooked,—and which we have reserved for this place,—because it relates to the entire scheme of our duties,—or the general spirit with which we discharge them. What we mean is, that it ought to be our endeavour to perform all our duties rather from a spirit of love than of fear;—to consider ourselves as not simply called by duty or obligation, but permitted as a privilege, to show our fidelity by doing our part with alacrity and steadfastness;—and thus to make all the parts of our obedience a cheerful and joyous offering of our affections to God. There are many individuals who require the excitement of fear to urge them to the discharge of their task,—and it is generally believed that the most respectable of all motives is that of a sense of duty or obligation, directed to this purpose. But it ought to be kept in mind, that not only fear, but duty and obligation, are only valuable as supplying the place of a still higher and nobler feeling,—and that as "children of God" we have not attained to the characteristic excellence of that relation, till we have

been able, in all circumstances, to look up to God as "our Father,"—and to perform all the parts of our assigned task from the delightful feeling of gratitude or love.

We have but one concluding word to add respecting the comparative advantages of the mode of fulfilling duty which consists in aiming after perfection, and seeking to realize this perfection by a few efforts,—and that plan which we have recommended and which points to a slower indeed, but, as we venture to believe, a much surer and pleasanter path. The different effects of these two plans may be summed up in as many sentences.

The former method invites the mind to aspire after an object which is beyond its strength, and to seek to attain that object by means which are altogether inadequate to it;—it hence supplies it with no exhilarating emotions as the stimulants of its labour,—but, on the contrary, depresses and exhausts it by vague and aimless longings;—it disposes it to mourn as for the greatest of calamities, even over those occasional and almost unavoidable failures which result from the very imperfection of our pre-

sent condition and powers;—and, on the whole, it substitutes *fear* for love as the motive of duty,—and gives a sombre and cheerless colouring to the whole aspect of life.

The method we have explained points out, on the contrary, an attainable object, and recommends the employment of means quite suited to its attainment;—it thus supplies us with a constant stimulant and reward of our toils, in the delightful feeling that our labours are tending to a good and successful issue;—it supports the heart under the experience of those failures which cannot be separated from our present imperfect and erring nature;—and, in one word,—by substituting *love* for fear as the motive of duty, it makes progress in virtue the serenest and most delightful of all occupations.

PART FOURTH.

A GOOD LIFE.

PROV. iv. 18. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

JOHN ix. 4. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day,—for the night cometh, when no man can work.*

IN the first part of this Work we have considered the *situation* of man as a subject of the kingdom of God,—that is to say, we have endeavoured to point out the peculiarities of that portion of the Divine dominions amidst which man holds his place, and to which his whole nature is adapted. In the second part of the Work we endeavoured to state what is the *object* proposed to man as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—that is to say, what is the precise duty given him to fulfil. In the third part of the treatise, we have endeavoured to cor-

rect some prevailing errors respecting the *mode* of fulfilling the duty prescribed to man;—and have made it our study to point out what seems to us to be the true method of accomplishing that duty in the most effectual and becoming style. And, throughout the whole of these previous portions of the Work, we have drawn the attention of the reader repeatedly and strongly to the importance of the distinction between the *object* proposed to man and the *helps* afforded him, by his peculiar powers and capabilities, for the due and successful discharge of his duty,—because we are satisfied that the whole of this subject has been commonly treated in too vague and perplexed a manner,—and, especially, that the most mischievous misconceptions have originated in confounding the *object* proposed to man with the *best manner* of addressing himself to the attainment of that object. We accordingly again recommend to the reader to make this distinction familiar to his thoughts.

In the part of the Work on which we are now to enter, we intend to state, generally, the *rules* or *maxims* of a good life,—that is to say, we intend to offer a representation or picture, under general heads, of that degree and style of excellence

which seems competent to man, and which every human being, consequently, by a due use of his powers, is capable of realizing. This, as the reader will readily perceive, is a distinct purpose from that aimed at in the second part of the treatise, in which we endeavoured to point out the *object* proposed to man, or the duty required of him,—and also, more particularly, from that pursued in the third part, in which we stated the *best mode* of fulfilling that duty. Our object, in that portion of the Work, was chiefly to correct some great misapprehensions which have gained a very general prevalence respecting the course which man ought to pursue in endeavouring to realize his purpose,—and to set him on the right road, by traversing which only he can effectually gain his end. In the part on which we are now entering, our business is to point out the *rules* or *maxims* which must be observed, that the route proposed may be traversed in the most expeditious and cheerful style;—and the difference between the object aimed at in the third and in this last part, is, consequently, the same as between pointing out the path which must be followed, and giving such rules as may enable him, who

is disposed to enter on it, to pursue his course with steadiness and success.

Now the grand principle which we mean to make use of throughout this last part, is the same with that by which all the preceding portions of the Work have been characterized, namely, that the most common pursuits and occupations of life form part of the duty given to man,—and may thus become, by being well performed, a service done to God,—so that man may be, throughout all the parts of his conduct, a Living Temple, consecrated to the true worship and service of his Creator.

This idea flows directly from the account formerly given respecting the situation of man as a subject of the Divine kingdom,—and respecting the *characteristically religious* nature by which man is distinguished;—and the idea has some advantages so important and influential, that we shall here draw the attention of the reader once more to them in one or two sentences.

In the first place, this idea *unites* all duties, secular and religious, by exhibiting them all as parts of

that true and acceptable service which God has appointed man to perform;—it thus gives a fine *simplicity and entireness* to our conception of the duty given to man to fulfil;—it takes away the *desecration* which, in the common mode of viewing our duty to God, seems to be attached to the ordinary but momentous concerns of daily life;—and it corrects the opinions of religious men respecting those services which are more *strictly Divine*, by showing them to be but direct expressions of those religious feelings which are characteristic of man, and by the influence of which he is capable of making his whole conduct a "sacrifice well pleasing in the sight of God,"—and of becoming, indeed, throughout his whole mode of acting and feeling, a *Living Temple* dedicated to the ceaseless worship of his Creator.

It hence follows, that this idea is pre-eminently fitted to lead men to enter on the discharge of the ordinary duties of their place in life with *alacrity* and *animation*;—because, with this idea of the sacred nature of such duties, the time spent in them no longer appears,—as it is apt to appear to those whose minds are occupied by more contracted notions,—merely as so much of their existence, which they are under the hard necessity of devoting to

things that have no relation to the ultimate purpose of their being,—but, on the contrary, as time spent in services which form the true duty given to man to fulfil,—and by his successful discharge of which he is approving himself a faithful subject of the Divine kingdom.

Even the *humblest duties* that enter into the lot of man, thus become invested with a character of surpassing interest and grandeur;—and there is none of those duties so humble, or apparently uninfluential, as not to offer itself to the mind which has gained this habit of viewing all conduct,—as an opportunity afforded to it of showing its loyalty by a service which God only may perceive and appreciate, but which, when well and perseveringly done, may be "as pleasing in his sight" as services, that, to the eye of man, seem invested with a far grander and more important aspect.

In a word, by far the most valuable impression that can be given to any mind, is that which thus leads it to view *all the parts of conduct* as a service paid to God,—who has made the common occupations of life, the duty that must occupy by far the greater portion of our time in this world,—and who will, therefore, view the conscientious fulfilment of

these duties as a service paid to himself. Indeed there cannot be a more miserable or more erroneous impression, though unfortunately there is none more prevalent in life,—than that which so commonly leads "serious-minded men" to believe, that God has so constituted the lot of man, that he is forced to spend by far the greater portion of his earthly existence in the fulfilment of duties, or performance of actions, which not only have no relation to his main destiny, but which are *hostile*, by the spirit which they inspire, to his greatest and final interests;—and the best of all the services, consequently, that could be rendered to men, is that of convincing them, that even their most common occupations and pursuits are parts, and important parts, of the duty assigned to them,—and that they are thus at all moments in a condition, by the conscientious and becoming fulfilment of these duties, to offer a testimony of their loyalty to God,—and to promote the final advancement of their best and everlasting interests.

This subject, however, is so very important, that it may be useful, before proceeding to the other parts of these preliminary remarks, to bring it before the view of the reader under another aspect,—and

with reference to a mode of considering the common pursuits of life which is extremely common among men,—and which, indeed, seems almost forced on them by the most obvious aspects of these pursuits.

The view to which we allude is this;—commonly human life, as it is transacted upon the surface of this world, does not appear to us simply as a series or aggregate of *equally* important events, but rather as a succession of results, occurring at certain distances of time and with *different degrees* of importance;—so that by far the greater number of our ordinary actions are not performed for themselves, but in reference to some more distant and valuable end, towards which we suppose them to be leading us,—and from their reference to which they derive their chief value and character.

And as these subordinate actions, which, however, make up by far the greater part of life,—have thus little apparent value of their own, we are apt to suppose that they cannot by any means attain to the dignity of services done to God,—and that if that title belongs to any portion of daily conduct, it can only be to those more important and prominent results towards which the minuter parts of conduct seem only valuable in so far as they contribute.

Now, as this is an aspect under which the events of life are constantly presenting themselves to those who are occupied in its interests, it may be important to vary our illustration of the principle on which this Work is conducted, by presenting it under a form, or with some explanations suggested by this aspect of ordinary occurrences;—and this we cannot do more effectually than in the words of an author to whose speculations we have already had occasion to refer,—and whose powers of illustration, though sometimes descending to very humble and familiar instances,—are almost unrivalled. The passage occurs in a discourse, entitled, "On doing all for the Glory of God."

"It remains," says he, "to be explained how we can act always with intention to do the will of God, without having him always in our thoughts, or how we can pursue an end without holding it in contemplation during every step of the pursuit; and this we may quickly learn by reflecting on the narrowness of our own comprehension, which is seldom capable of retaining the whole of a design, while attentive to the measures requisite for completing it."

After alluding to the powers of superior beings,

whom he supposes to be capable of viewing life on a far wider scale, and with greater unity of scheme,—so that all its parts appear to be connected,—and to possess an equality of interest from their union as portions of one vast and simple design,—he thus proceeds to apply his illustration more directly to the situation and powers of man.

"But *our* understandings," says he, "are far less capacious,—wherefore our prospects are scanty, and of those lying within our compass there is only one small spot in the centre that we can discover clearly and distinctly,—so we are forced to turn our eye successively to the several parts of a scene before us, in order that we may take the necessary guidance for our measures. When we have fixed upon the means requisite for effecting a purpose, our whole attention to them is little enough to carry us through in the prosecution, and were we perpetually to hold the purpose in contemplation, it must interrupt, and might utterly defeat its own accomplishment. He that travels to London must not keep his eye continually gazing upon St Paul's steeple, nor his thoughts ruminating upon the business he has to do, or pleasures he is to take there: he must mind the road as he goes along,—he must

look for a good inn,—and take care to order accommodations and refreshments for himself and horse. But whatever steps we take in prosecution of some end are always ascribed thereto as to their motive, and we are said, in common propriety of speech, to act all along with intention to gain our end, though we have it not every moment in view. Thus, if a traveller come to town upon a charitable design to succour some family in affliction or distress by his counsel, his company, his labours, his interest, or any other seasonable assistance, his whole journey, and every part of it,—while inquiring his way,—while bustling through a crowd,—while baiting at an inn, was an act of charity performed with a benevolent intention."

"In like manner, whatever schemes we lay out upon the principle of glorifying God by promoting the happiness of his creatures or any one of them,—whether they lead us to the care of our health, or our properties,—to common business, or recreation, we may be truly and properly said to act with intention to do his will, though, during the prosecution, we should be totally immersed in worldly concerns, and taken up with sensible objects."

"When busied in my chapters," continues our author in his own playful but forcible style of illustration, "labouring to trace the mazes of Providence, and show that, in the severest dispensations, they never terminate upon evil,—how defective soever the performance, the intention seems to be good;—after toiling awhile the ideas begin to darken,—the mental organs to grow stiff,—and the spirits exhausted: I then perceive the best thing I can do for proceeding in my work, is to lay in a fresh stock by some exercise or diversion, which may enable me to resume the microscope and telescope with reanimated vigour. So I sally forth from my cavern in quest of any little amusement that may offer;—perhaps there is an exhibition of pictures,—I gaze around, like Cimon at Iphigenia, with such judgment as uninstructed nature can supply. I meet with an acquaintance,—who, being a connoisseur in painting, entertains me with criticisms founded upon the rules of art, which come in at one ear and go out at the other. Others tell me of the weather, of general warrants, of a very clever political pamphlet, a rhapsody of Rousseau's, or a slanderous poem, which, because I am a studious man, and a lover of wit, they recommend to my

perusal. I endeavour to join in the conversation as well as my penury of fashionable materials will permit,—and cut such jokes as I can to enliven it.—For recreation is now my business, and the sublimest ideas, which might draw on a labour of thought, would defeat my purpose. Nevertheless, while engaged in this series of trifles, am I not pursuing my main intention, even in the very efforts made for thrusting it out of my sight? And if my *first design* bore any reference to the Divine glory, may not I be said, with propriety, still to act for the same end more effectually than if I had spent the time in thought-straining fervours of prayer and devotion?"

"Since then," adds our author, "*whatever under-purposes* branch out from our principal, and were taken up because conducive thereto, are esteemed parts of that, and every thing done with a view to accomplish these, is done for the main end whereto they conduct,—since the ability, instruments, materials, and opportunities for performing the most important services we are capable of, depend much upon the condition of body and spirits, upon external accommodations and conveniences, and upon our intercourse among mankind;—and since upon every trivial occasion there is a right and

a wrong choice to be taken, some little present accession or remote advance to be made towards increasing the stock of happiness in the creation, wherein the Divine glory is manifested: I conceive it possible in theory, that a man may lay out his *whole plan of conduct*, his common actions and amusements as well as his devotions and exercises of virtue, upon that one foundation, the *glory of God*. So that, in the business of his profession, in the management of his family, in the cares of his health, in his contracts and contentions, in his familiar conversations, his reveries and pleasures, 'whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does,' he may be truly said to do all with intention to please God,—though he has him not always in his thoughts,—provided the several intentions he successively pursues become such, upon an opinion of their being the properest measures that could be taken for contributing towards that principal end."

This quotation has been given merely with a view to that aspect of life under which it seems to contain not simply a series or aggregate of *equally important* events,—but rather a succession of events, some of which are *more important and final* than the rest,—and from their relation to which the subor-

dinate parts of the series derive their value. But the truth is, that the simplest and most satisfactory mode of viewing this whole subject, is that which considers all the various events of life as parts of the duty assigned us by God,—which, therefore, we can discharge as services given to us by him,—and which, when so performed, become,—whatever their relative importance to other events may be,—testimonies of our loyalty, which may be as sincerely and acceptably paid by the performance of those duties which seem small and unimportant,—as by the discharge of others which only *appear* more momentous to us,—from the limited and partial view which alone we are capable of taking of the relative position and comparative value of events. To clearer intellects,—and more extensive powers of observation, —which could take in the whole plan of Nature and courses of Providence, all events would probably appear to possess *equal* importance,—and to be but parts of one simple,—and entire scheme,—only broken down into apparently distinct portions to suit our limited and progressive powers of observation and of action. Under this view the smallest actions may be the source of the most important results;—and there is no part of conduct of which we are en-

titled to say, that it is undeserving of our care, or incapable of being used as a testimony of our duty to God.

In the application of the principle which we have thus stated, the Author is anxious to avoid the common error of branching out his exhibition of duty or of a good life,—into a great variety of particular rules. This he conceives to be the prevailing error in the construction of such works,—and especially of the greatest of all the works that have been written with this design,—he means the voluminous,—and valuable work of Reinhard on Christian Morals.

The great objection to the *plan* of such works is, that they break down the *unity of life and action*, —and exhibit human conduct under aspects different from those in which it is seen amidst the living scenes and animating interests of real life. They are constructed, in fact, with a reference to technical divisions of the powers of human nature, which are derived entirely from the limited theories of darker ages,—and presuppose abstractions that are

entirely arbitrary and unsuited to the *simple and entire* structure which human nature really exhibits.

And they are as useless in their applications as they are erroneous in their conception or design;—for, not only are these rules insupportably tedious in the perusal,—but, to be observed, they presuppose a disposition in mankind to avail themselves of their direction;—but it is obvious, that where this disposition already exists, particular rules are scarcely necessary to be stated,—or, indeed, cannot be applied to the constantly-varying incidents and details of life,—and, on the other hand, when this good disposition is wanting, there is no chance that such rules will be consulted,—or be of any efficacy, if they happen to be pressed on the notice of men. Such vast bodies of particular rules,—branched out under technical divisions,—may, therefore, be a curious study to those who have a taste for such reading,—but are really of no use to the multitude of men;—nor, indeed, are they capable of a literal application to the infinitely-varied events that make up the usual course of life.

The Author is, therefore, of opinion, that his object is more likely to be attained by the exhibition of a *general outline* or picture of a good life;—that

is to say, of that style of conduct which man can really exhibit,—and by the realization of which he is entitled to be considered as having acted up to the capabilities of the nature with which he is gifted,—and as having duly availed himself of the circumstances amidst which he is placed.

Most men, it is obvious, have no such *distinct* idea of what really constitutes a good life. They act, on the contrary, very much at random,—and proceed from day to day along the stream of events, without having endeavoured to state with themselves what is the style of conduct to which they should devote themselves, that they may secure the measure of excellence which is consistent with their powers,—and suited to the peculiarities of their place in life.

The evil goes yet farther than this;—for they not only have not formed to themselves any idea or plan of conduct,—or of a good life, suited to their powers and place,—but most men are distracted by an idea,—that there is a kind and measure of good quite distinct from the tenor of conduct which they feel themselves bound to maintain, by the daily and pressing incidents amidst which they are placed,—and on the due management of which

their interests, so far as this world, at least, is concerned, are suspended. In plain words, most men have an idea of an excellence which is altogether abstract and imaginary,—and their minds are in a perpetual state of disquiet and contention,—between what they feel that, by their place in life, they *must* do,—and their conception of some abstract, and ideal, and purely-spiritual excellence, which, from their erroneous modes of thought, they fancy it is their true and only *interest* to attain.

The consequence of all this is, that men's conception of what is good in conduct seems only to dishearten and perplex them in the conduct of real transactions;—and that, in pursuit of an abstract and imaginary good, they lose much of that interest in the things of this life, which would secure to them substantial worth.

Now, to counteract this, it is the purpose of the Author, in this part of the Work,—to offer such a view of a well-conducted life,—as may at once present a *distinct conception*, to the minds of his readers, of such a style of conduct as all men may attain, —and may, at the same time, reconcile their pursuit of earthly objects with a discharge of the duty which they owe to God,—as subjects of his kingdom.

Such a picture of conduct will at once present a clear idea to the mind of the reader;—it will call him to the pursuit of an excellence, which is quite attainable,—which is, in itself, of great beauty and interest,—and from the prosecution of which there will result, instead of the disheartening and perplexing feelings which are attached to the pursuit of a merely abstract virtue, a constant succession of cheerful and animating emotions derived from the consciousness of the value of the object on which our labours are expended, and from the delightful satisfaction, that, in pursuit of that object, we have before us an advantage which can be attained,—and which, amidst all the varying events of life, we may be actually realizing.

With the view of exhibiting such a picture of a good life, the Author means to take the conduct of *one day* as his fundamental conception,—showing what are the natural expressions given to the different parts of a day by Nature herself,—and what is the corresponding style of conduct, by the exhibition of which man should accommodate himself to the intimations of Nature.

This fundamental conception will be afterwards varied by rules appropriate to the changing incidents which give to *different* days a character and expression in some degree distinct from that of the more ordinary tenor of life.

This will be followed by some observations illustrative of the character of *human life in general*,—and fitted, it is hoped, to suggest important rules of conduct to those who are anxious to act up to the dignity of their place in life. Some important reflections will naturally occur in this part of the discourse,—respecting the peculiar character of both the *happiness* and the *virtue* which are competent to man, as an inhabitant of this apparently mixed department of the Divine dominions. The difference between the Christian idea of a *perfect man*,—and that which was in use among the philosophers of ancient times, will naturally draw our attention;—and the treatise will be concluded by some remarks on the connexion which subsists between this outer court of the vast Temple of Nature, and the more august and enduring interests of that part of it which to us is but shadowed out by the objects and events of time.

The Author has now only to observe, that the

idea of taking the conduct of a day as the fundamental conception of this portion of his Work,—is not peculiar to him,—though he intends his illustrations to be managed on a plan of his own. The ancient Pythagoreans,—and the monkish orders of the middle ages,—both proposed rules of conduct founded on the same primary conception;—but to the productions of both of these the following observations seem to be applicable:—

The precepts of Pythagoras were intended for a *philosophic sect* of a very peculiar character,—aimed at forming a style of conduct not entitled to the appellation of natural,—and, at all events, were too rigid and uniform to be capable of application to the living and constantly-changing interests of human life.

The monkish rules, also, were too particular,—too monotonous,—that is to say,—too much founded on an idea, that all days might be conducted on one plan,—they were also constructed with a view to the use of persons who had the disposal of their time almost entirely at their own choice,—and, above all, they aimed almost solely at the formation of a religious or devotional character.

The purpose of the Author is different in all these

respects. He wishes his directions to be not particular but general;—so that they may be capable of being varied, and adapted in their applications to the infinite diversity of circumstances amidst which life is constantly placing the various individuals of mankind. He wishes, in short, rather to offer a *general* idea of what a good life should be, than to give particular rules for all the changing incidents of life;—and, especially, he is anxious that his scheme of conduct may be so constructed as to admit the *most ordinary duties* of life into the character of services done to God.

DESCRIPTION OF A WELL-SPENT DAY.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE DIFFERENT SEASONS OF THE DAY.

It deserves to be remarked, that Nature herself has affixed a distinct character to the different portions of the day, which no attentive mind can altogether overlook,—and which seems to point out, in a very interesting manner, the duties appropriate to these different portions.

Thus, the characteristics of the morning are stillness,—freshness,—renovated strength,—and a reawakening, as it were, of the energies of Nature to a new course of action and of enjoyment.

It has been finely said, that, as human life has been so constituted, that every human being who is born into the world, is, in one sense, "the first man" to himself,—and looks upon Nature with the same

feelings, as if for him, before all others, its living spectacle had been spread out,—so, also, every morning that chases the darkness of night is a continued repetition of that earliest day, when the beautiful order of Nature was completed,—and her "ever-young powers" began that course, which has been beheld by so many generations with delight,—and which is destined, throughout countless ages, to maintain her primeval character in undecaying vigour.

The hours of morning are accordingly still the freshest,—and to most minds the calmest,—and sweetest of the day. If this statement be in some cases reversed,—and if there be minds, as we believe there are, which are more subject at this season to irritation,—and painful feelings, than at other times, this is merely the effect of a peculiarity of constitution,—and especially of those tendencies to disease which are connected with a weak or irritable state of the digestive functions;—but even to such persons, if means are taken to relieve this irritation, as by an early application of light and wholesome food,—the character appropriate to the earliest hours of the day will still manifest itself in all its beauty,—and Nature will be felt at that season to offer some

of her loveliest and most soothing expressions to all human hearts.

We shall immediately perceive what are the peculiar duties which this character of the "early dawn" imposes,—but at present we are only employed in noticing the *expression* or *character* which Nature has attached to the different portions of the day.

The season when the first meal is taken is important, as being that when one of the most mysterious and influential of all the living functions is called into exercise;—and it is accordingly of moment, that most persons should be aware, that on the propriety of their conduct at that time,—the health and comfortable enjoyment of existence, at least in the case of a very great majority of individuals, depend for the remainder of the day.

To all those, therefore, to whom health is an object of importance,—a due attention to the state of their digestive functions at this time ought to be recommended.

Thus much we have judged it proper to say with respect to the first and earliest portions of the day.

The character of that portion of the day by which the hours of morning are succeeded, is not less distinctly marked by Nature than that of her earliest and freshest season. It is a season of animation and of busy enterprise,—all the energies of Nature seem gradually to have attained to their most intense state,—the wide face of the earth is covered by the busy multitudes of our race,—the Sun himself is pursuing his course "like a giant in the heavens," and summoning all the secret agencies of Nature, even to her utmost depths, to their strongest exertions,—and wherever his beams extend, the animated course of this world's affairs is run.

This then is the season in which man also is called, by the example of Nature herself, to labour and to application;—and this, accordingly, is the time which mankind universally has devoted to their most important and active concerns.

Nature herself, however, having gained the summit of her glory, gradually begins to relax in her exertions;—and the third season of the day has

accordingly been very commonly devoted to animal enjoyment,—to social affections,—to domestic endearments,—and to the indulgence of a taste for the refinements of art.

It is now that human life, especially in its civilised and highly-cultivated forms, presents some of its most agreeable and lovely aspects;—and we shall have occasion, accordingly, to point out more at large, in the prosecution of this subject, the rules which ought to be observed for the due enjoyment of this portion of the day,—the delightful effects which, when properly employed, it is fitted to produce,—and the accordance of the gratifications which it offers with the general plan which Nature presents to us,—for the regulation of our conduct.

By a continued decline, through an almost imperceptible series of gradations, Nature returns from her noontide splendour to the calmness,—and sober colouring of evening.

This season also, like the morning, is characterized by stillness,—by soft but beautiful forms,—by a disposition to repose,—and by an opening up to man of those mysterious depths amidst which he

holds his place,—and where, from the small but lovely spot of creation which is distinctly revealed to his eye,—and made subservient to his uses,—he is permitted to obtain a glimpse of those transcendent glories which beautify the Living Temple of God,—and to feel his own relation to some grand though imperfectly-understood order, with the realities of which he is, in future portions of his existence, to be made acquainted.

This, then, is evidently a season in which Nature herself seems to call us to calm thought,—to a lively participation of the delights which creation, in its inimitable charms, is continually offering to our view,—and especially to a solemn anticipation of those grander scenes, of which all the present loveliness of earth is but a shadow,—and where the prophetic aspirations of our wonderful and richly-endowed nature shall yet receive a constantly-progressive realization.

There are thus four distinct seasons marked out by Nature herself in the progress of the day,—and each of them reminding man of some important duties which he has to fulfil, or of some indulgent

bounty which Nature has permitted him to taste. Morning is the season of freshness,—of renovated strength,—and of calm preparation for the duties of the day.—Then comes the time of active labour, —of intense study,—or of busy intercourse amidst the haunts of men.—A season of animal enjoyment, —of social affection,—of domestic endearment,—and of taste for art,—intervenes as a kind relaxation from the graver and more harassing pursuits of the preceding period.—And evening closes the beautiful succession,—amidst a gradual falling of softer shadows,—and a deeper feeling of mysterious sentiments,—till immortality itself seems to burst upon the human soul, from the brightening splendours of those countless worlds,—by which this darkened abode of mortality is encompassed.

Morning and evening are thus both seasons of repose and of thought,—but the character of the two has distinct expressions. In the earliest hours, —it is thought chiefly directed to the affairs of this life,—and to that course of events,—by which the coming day is to be distinguished. In the latest, —it is thought reposing on the delightful prospect of a world beyond the present,—and called, by the opening glories of the "firmament of heaven,"—

never entirely to lose sight of that period when all temporal things shall be succeeded by a "new heaven and a new earth."

We now proceed to point out more particularly the duties appropriate to these different portions of the day.

MORNING.—From the general character of this portion of the day, as already observed, it seems plain that the great duty appropriate to it,—is preparation of the mind for the more active and pressing pursuits by which the business of the day is to be characterized;—and in order to obtain this in the most effectual manner, there are several subordinate duties which seem indispensable.

In the first place, the earliest duty of the day, after that of putting the body into a becoming state of cleanliness and preparation,—is the indispensable duty of *devotion*,—both by devout offering up of the heart to God,—and by perusing "that word" which he has stamped with his own inspiration,—and given to man as his own voice made legible in human characters. This devout commencement of every day is so obvious a duty,—so distinctly recommended by Nature herself, who then seems to offer her "early

incense" to the great Source of all Beauty,—and so admirably fitted for preparing the mind for all the coming scenes of the day,—that no heart can question its obligation,—nor indeed neglect it without self-reproach,—and a conscious disregard of its best and most salutary privileges.

It is merely necessary, therefore, thus shortly to notice this duty,—and to state that there are few situations so pressing, which, to a well-disposed mind, can be felt to be an apology for the neglect of it;—and this recommendation applies not merely to the offering up of the wishes of the heart to God, —but also to the perusal of that word,—in which God has revealed himself as speaking to man,—and calling him to the performance of all his duties.

Next to this exercise of devotion,—and of listening to the Word of God,—there is another duty most fitted for this portion of the day,—and in beautiful harmony with that we have now recommended. It is—a *quiet contemplation* of the face of Nature,—and a cultivation of those sweetening and invigorating sentiments which such a contemplation cannot fail to suggest.

One of the most beautiful of the ancient Pythagorean maxims was that which inculcated on the

disciples of that school,—that duly as the morning dawned, they should turn their eyes upon the face of heaven,—and learn, "from the regularity of its movements,—from its serenity,—and from its cloudless purity,"—those great lessons of moral wisdom,—which might dispose them to meet the events of life with a well-ordered,—a composed,—and a pure spirit;—and if we consult the lives of the most excellent and exemplary of mankind, we shall find that this daily contemplation of the face of Nature has been one of their chief sources of enjoyment,—and that from it they have derived some of the finest exercises both of their intellectual and sentimental nature.

Even a few moments devoted to this daily study are invaluable;—and the Author can state, from his own experience,—that there are few moments of life which have been to him the occasion of purer happiness,—or to which he is disposed to look back with a more earnest wish to perpetuate the enjoyment of them. It is not merely admiration of the beauty of Nature that is awakened in such moments, but almost all the feelings,—both moral and devotional,—that are most closely allied with the best and purest state of the human heart.

The third duty of the morning is that of a seri-

ous looking-forward to the business of the day,—and the formation of a plan, in so far as circumstances permit, for the prosecution of its business.

"This settlement of a plan for the duties of the day is not merely recommended," says an author of high moral wisdom, "by a regard to prudence, or because the affairs of life are likely to succeed best with the man who advances to them according to a preconceived scheme,—but a regard to *moral feeling* demands the same course,—for the duties which we have to fulfil each day must be distinctly conceived, and the best method of prosecuting them resolved on, if we would execute them as becomes men who are anxious to act in a dutiful and conscientious manner."

The truth is, that most men view the ordinary business of life with by far too careless and unthinking a spirit. They advance to it almost without design, and permit themselves to be carried unreflectingly along by the stream of events, whatever may be the direction it happens to take, and however momentous may be the consequences which are involved in its issue. But this is by no means the spirit in which the affairs even of this world ought to be met;—it is a solemn struggle to which man is daily

summoned with many unforeseen events, the ultimate direction and influences of which he cannot determine;—and no better security is given to him for the success of his enterprises, than that he should advance to them daily with a feeling that they are momentous,—and that all his skill and good conduct will be necessary for conducting them so as to realize their best effects. A good and wise man, therefore, will make it his care to meet life with a serious purpose;—and it is good that all men should be taught, that to meet its affairs without thought, or with no feeling of their solemnity, is unworthy of the high nature which we bear as men, and unsuitable to the important consequences that may result, either from unforeseen occurrences, or from the secret influences of even the most apparently insignificant. All the events of life are connected,—and no maxim is more true or more worthy of careful consideration, than that the most serious events of our lives often have their origin in circumstances that, at the time of their occurrence, seemed to be quite casual and of little promise.

Such are the duties which seem to be appropriate to the morning,—and which appear, indeed, to result from the very character which nature has given to that lovely portion of the day. They are all soothing and elevating duties,—and their united effect is to *compose* the mind for the more trying events by which the progress of the day is to be distinguished,—corresponding in this respect with the character which Nature herself has impressed on this season, as a period of repose,—of freshness,—and of renovated vigour,—preparatory to the more intense excitation which she is about to call forth.

We say nothing of the *length of time* which should be devoted to such duties, because that and all similar points must be determined by the peculiar circumstances in which individuals are placed. For the same reason we do not think that rules universally applicable can be given respecting the frequently-agitated question of the duty of early rising. But it seems quite clear, that whatever space we may be able to afford to such exercises, and whether our morning is to be of longer or shorter duration, the exercises we have recommended are indispensable

according to our opportunities,—and that those who fail altogether to improve and enjoy the hours of morning are guilty, unless bad health be their apology, of an impropriety which cannot be reconciled with the idea of a life spent according to the best plan.

FORENOON.—This is the part of the day more especially devoted to business. Nature herself, we have already said, seems to point out this appropriation;—for it is then that her energies are called forth in the most intense degree,—and over all the earth this accordingly is the time when the important concerns of this world are transacted.

In general, it may be observed, that the rules of morality or of good conduct, as these are usually constructed, have little direct application to the actual business of life;—these rules are for the most part mere *general maxims* which touch not directly any particular point of conduct, but are viewed as applicable to the whole tenor of life. It is from this *abstract and general* form of these rules, however, that they are at once so uninteresting and of so little efficiency,—and that they assume the aspect rather of *trite sayings*, which indicate the good moral dis-

position of those who delight to repeat them, than of *rules* which commend themselves to the observance of mankind by their obvious relation to immediate and pressing transactions. A system of rules constructed on another principle, and directly applicable to the actual conduct of men in the management of their ordinary avocations and transactions with each other, is still a desideratum in moral wisdom,—and, if well executed, would be received with much zeal by the well-disposed and actively-occupied part of mankind. The following suggestions are but a specimen of the *kind* of rules which are here alluded to:—

In the first place, every man should have a *distinct idea*, in so far as this is possible from his circumstances and particular vocation, of the precise duties required of him by his station in society, and by the calling which he follows.

It is a miserable thing for a man to live from day to day without exactly knowing what he has to do during the active portion of his day;—but it is not less true, that a great many men do pass their lives in this state of uncertainty and indecision. And this arises, in many cases, not from any want of a definite character in the actual vocations of such

persons, or from any impossibility of ascertaining what are the *precise duties* to which they ought to devote themselves, but simply from want of that considerate looking forward to the occupations of the day which we have already recommended as one of the chief duties of the morning,—and from a consequent neglect of settling with themselves what the progress of the busy part of the day is likely to summon them to perform.

This, however, though the case of a great many men, is a fault attended with very evil consequences. It lessens in a great degree their own happiness,—and gradually so far unhinges the mind as to unfit it for acting with decision amidst the pressure of events when they actually occur. It often generates a miserable feeling of utter incapacity for the duties of life,—and in minds of sensibility or of constitutional timidity produces a nervous irritation and a distaste for life, which would have been prevented or completely counteracted by the simple precaution of bringing daily before the view of the mind the actual sphere of duty given to be fulfilled.

This failing is especially apt to beset those whose situation exposes them to a multitude of small duties, the exact occurrence of which cannot be antici-

pated;—and all such persons, consequently, ought to be especially careful to state with themselves, before entering on the duties of their day, what is the precise nature of the exertions which they are called to make, and what the limits of that sphere of usefulness they have been appointed to occupy.

The observance of this rule would in many cases prevent much real unhappiness,—and, in all cases, would be attended with important advantage.

In the second place, it is important to remark, that, in general, the business of life does not so much demand great exertions, as a *continued* and *persevering discharge* of a uniform, and commonly of an easily-accomplished, *series of duties*;—and many important rules of conduct result from this consideration.

Thus it becomes the duty of a prudent man so to order his conduct in the management of his trust, that he may rather secure the steady, though it may be remote production of important benefits, than seek to realize great results by a few vigorous and occasional exertions. The fact is, that the good state of the world, as well as of private concerns, is maintained by the operation of general and quietly-executed laws;—and it is seldom that, either in the

conduct of Providence or in the fortunes of men, real and lasting changes are produced suddenly and unexpectedly. Every man, therefore, who has a trust, or fixed occupation in life, should in this respect imitate the conduct of Providence, and should seek chiefly to set such plans in operation as may be carried on easily and successfully through *a series* of years,—and ultimately produce lasting changes for good, rather than aim at forcing premature advantages by violent exertions which either entirely fail of their purpose, or delude with the appearance of results that have no permanent stability.

For the same reason, it is important to be aware, that more will ultimately be realized by the man who is daily reaping small accessions of profit, than by him who, without attending to such remote advantages, seeks only to attain the full enjoyment of his labours by sudden and occasional exertions. Hence the smallest duties should not be neglected, nor the least important advantages overlooked.

Another result of the same general rule is, that perseverance and a steady discharge of the duties of his condition, often through long years of expectation and discouragement, ought not, however, to be neglected by the man who is desirous of fully

realizing all the good which is competent to his place.

Indeed, Providence seems to have intended that this view of the necessity of perseverance and steady application, often through a long period of suspense, should be strongly pressed, by the ordinary course of affairs, on the minds of all who enter on the business of this world. In general, it is not till *much preparation* has been gone through, and many unavailing attempts made, that men actually attain the place they are chiefly to fill in life;—and after such place has been gained, most men are made to feel, that the same perseverance and patient waiting is necessary for the discharge of their duties as for gaining the station in which these duties are prescribed to them. Nature herself seems thus to announce to men that life is a serious struggle, demanding firmness and perseverance, and a vigilant attention to all duties;—and he who would execute the business of his place in society in an effectual manner ought to take his measures from these lessons,—and grudge no *continuance of labour* which the circumstances of his condition may seem to impose on him. Such perseverance almost always is rewarded by the attainment of its object.

All this has been said on the supposition that Providence, both on the great scene of life and in the fortunes of individuals, seldom requires great exertions, but rather brings to pass the most valuable results by the wise and steady use of *quiet and sure-working means*. But there are also, in the third place, times and combinations of circumstances when a different course of conduct is required;—and there is scarcely any man so securely placed,—or so involved in a definite round of duties, as not to be frequently, and, perhaps, unexpectedly called on to make exertions of a more extraordinary kind,—and to display virtues or energies of a more adventurous and decisive cast. The times when such combinations of circumstances occur are commonly the most momentous in the life of man. They are pregnant with results of vast interest to all his future proceedings;—and it is, accordingly, by the power of seizing and happily using such conjunctures, that those who have made the most splendid figure on the theatre of human affairs have chiefly been distinguished,—and it is confessedly to these talents that they have owed their greatest advantages.

Even, however, in the most ordinary transactions, and in the lot of the humblest individuals, such con-

junctures are occasionally occurring;—times when energy and promptitude,—and courage,—and high-mindedness, make themselves apparent,—or are called on for their assistance;—and the most successful men will always be found to be those who know best how to exert the qualities which such combinations of events demand.

Every man, therefore, so far as he is able, should hold himself in readiness for such occurrences, and should not refuse the exertion which they demand;—and hence it becomes a most important rule of life,—that, when such events do occur,—we should be prepared "to exercise discrimination with promptitude,—to choose our measures with rapidity,—and to apply them, when chosen, with energy and resolution."

In the fourth place, the business of life, to be done in the most becoming manner, requires *a union of excellencies* which are seldom found in the same individual,—but the combination of which is essential to the most effectual discharge of all trusts.

Thus, the business of life ought to be done *liberally*;—that is to say, under the guidance of enlarged and enlightened principles,—but yet with a

strict regard to *the ordinary rules* by which the mere details of action are carried on. In this respect, however, very great differences may be observed among men. There are individuals, whose views are in all cases of the most liberal kind;—but they, at the same time, are not sufficiently attentive to *common forms*, and thus their liberality, from want of this grand safeguard, often exposes them to much sore and humiliating trouble. There are other men, who are scrupulously attentive to all forms,—but incapable, on almost any occasion, of rising to the elevation of wide or luminous views,—and hence their conduct becomes low and severe,—and they fail to gain the respect or love of those with whom they act.

There is no impossibility, however, of uniting both qualities,—that is, *liberality of view* with strict *adherence to form*;—and this is that perfection of conduct, after which those who would do the business of the world in its best possible style, should constantly aim.

The great transactions and leading stations of life, at any rate, should only be intrusted to men who possess *liberality of principle*;—but even the most common affairs and humblest stations will be

managed in the best,—the most effectual,—and the most acceptable manner, by those who, with strict adherence to rule,—are yet guided in all things by luminous and liberal principles.

It is, perhaps, one of the rarest things, to see these different qualities in union;—but this union is the true excellence in conduct, after which men engaged in the business of life,—and anxious to acquit themselves in the most becoming manner, should aspire.

Again;—the business of life ought to be done *firmly*;—that is, without permitting the resolution we have taken to be weakened by circumstances;—but yet it should be done with all *due regard to the feelings and interests of other men.*

Here, also, there is a great defect in the conduct,—or style of acting, of many persons. On the one hand, we see men who will not be led aside from their purpose by any considerations,—but who unfeelingly sacrifice the interests or happiness of other men to the promotion of their preconceived plans. And, on the other hand,—there are many individuals,—who, with the clearest conceptions of the justness of their own principles or schemes,—are yet unable to persevere in them against the most capri-

cious,—or most wanton solicitations of others. The true mode of managing any concern, however, consists in the union *of firmness*, or a steady adherence to our own purposes,—with a *tender regard to the interests of all other men*, who may be in a condition to be affected by our plans;—and the actual exhibition of this combination will be found, by those who endeavour to exhibit it, to be one of the most difficult, but yet beautiful realizations, which the actual conduct of life demands.

Still farther;—the business of life should be done *vigorously*;—that is, with energy,—or with the whole force and combined operation of our powers;—but yet, it should be done *without passion or irritation*;—and here, also, as in the former case, the widest differences may be observed among men,—and the greatest defects in individual characters.

Thus, there are men who only act with energy when under the influence of irritation,—and their conduct, accordingly, only leads to such consequences as passion and irritation usually induce. And, on the other hand, there are persons, who are so uniformly bland in their manner, but, at the same time, so destitute of energy,—that they are fitted

only to be trusted with affairs which can be managed by address,—or by persuasion.

The true perfection of conduct consists in the union of *energetic measures* with *gentleness of manners*,—and hence the force of the maxim so often quoted,—and so universally felt as applicable to conduct,—"*Suaviter in modo,—fortiter in re*;"—that is,—"vigorous measures,—with a calm or unirritated mode of conducting them."

In the fifth place,—the great rule to be observed with respect to all conduct, is that of viewing the faithful discharge of the duties of the station assigned us by our place in life, as a *service paid to God*,—and a mean of promoting the interests of his kingdom in the world.

This, as we have repeatedly endeavoured, in the course of this Work, to urge, is by far the best style of thought to which the minds of men can be habituated. For it will destroy *the regret* which well-disposed minds are so apt to feel, while devoting themselves to the duties of their station,—as if the time spent in these duties was so much of their existence subtracted from the pursuit of the only end that is worthy of man. It will take away the *desecration* that seems to hang over the common

pursuits of life, as if they had nothing in common with the true part which man, as a reasonable and moral being, has to act. It will give a *high character* to the discharge even of the humblest offices,—and will make the whole of life assume the aspect of "a sacrifice" offered unto God.

Thus, the most common duties and feelings of life will assume a holy character,—and man may conduct himself at all times as a *Living Temple*,—dedicated to the service of his Creator.

In the last place, the business of life ought to be done, not grudgingly or as a hard labour,—but *cheerfully*,—as a token of the delight which we have in doing well the part assigned us,—and as a testimony of the pleasure which we feel in expressing our loyalty and fidelity to God,—by the series of services to which he has called us,—and by the performance of which we believe, though we do not always foresee their results, that we are best contributing to the interests of the kingdom of God. It is a pleasant thing to see a man thus at all moments in a spirit of alacrity,—ready to perform any duty that presents itself,—and happy when opportunities are thus set before him,—at whatever expense of his own ease,—of approving his fidelity as

"a servant of God;"—nor is the business of life done in its most becoming and attractive style till this joyous and animated spirit is displayed in the discharge of it.

Such are some of the most important of the rules which should be observed in the management of business, and in the conduct of affairs;—and the more we think of these rules, the more shall we be satisfied, that it is but seldom that we observe a character, in which the requisitions of these rules are realized.

Many men live in a constant state of *uncertainty and ignorance* respecting the precise sphere of duties assigned them.

Many fail to conduct their affairs either *liberally*, —or *firmly*,—or *vigorously*,—or *with alacrity*.

It is but seldom that we see that *fine union of qualities* which we have endeavoured to point out as essential to a perfect style of conduct;—that is to say, the liberal-minded are sometimes negligent of common rules and forms; the formalists, on the other hand, are as commonly deficient in manly and enlightened principles; those who are resolute

in the prosecution of their schemes, sometimes act cruelly towards those who seem to stand in their way,—and those who are full of tenderness to men, are too easily led aside from the previously-formed convictions of their own judgment; men who put all their vigour into the execution of their purposes, are sometimes subject to excitement and passion,—and men who possess calmness and temper,—are not unfrequently destitute of that energy which is necessary for the prosecution of important purposes.

It is hence that so much excellence of character may be displayed in *the manner* of conducting affairs;—and it is hence, also, that a species of morality, *more applicable to actual transactions* than the abstract and general principles so often quoted, and become so trite from use,—seems still, as we said in commencing these illustrations, to be a desideratum in science

How difficult is it to form a character disposed to look forward to the business of each day with a solemn feeling of its importance,—and with a deliberate purpose of fulfilling it in the best style,—pursuing that business *liberally*,—but yet with strict attention to all necessary forms and rules,—*firmly*, but yet without violating the feelings or interests of

others;—*vigorously*; but with the utmost calmness and placidity of manner,—with an habitual belief, that, in the discharge of the most ordinary duties, we may do a *service well pleasing* to God,—and *joyous* in the acceptance of every opportunity of active exertion which circumstances may present!

And, if the formation of such a character be in the highest degree difficult, how much true beauty, and elevation of moral principle, is not such a character fitted to display!—and how valuable, consequently, would be a system of morality, which should be available for the production of such characters!

It is hoped that the foregoing hints may, at least, show that such a system of practical morality is possible;—and, perhaps, the leading topics may be found to have been noticed in the remarks that have now been submitted to the attention of the reader.

Dinner, and the Hours that immediately succeed it.—This, we have already said, is the season of animal indulgence,—of repose from the fatigues and agitations of business,—of enjoyment of domestic affections,—of social intercourse,—and of taste for art.

It is to be kept in mind, however, that the gratifications of appetite, and all the lower pleasures of an allied kind, degenerate from their purpose, and fail of their object,—when they are sought on *their own account*,—and become the objects either of fond anticipation,—or of deliberate reflection.

It is also to be remembered, that those pleasures are the most genuine and lasting which are *calmest*, —which can be maintained without satiety for the longest time,—or which can be made our daily solace.

It is farther of importance to be remarked,—that animal pleasures, when confined to the mere indulgence of appetite, are not only of a very low kind,—but almost fail to be sources of gratification;—that they derive, almost in every instance, much of their power of excitation from the *social affections* which they awaken;—and that they become more genuine and valuable, in so far as they are more abundantly mingled with those delights which flow from the higher and purer sources of our kindly and domestic charities,—or of our taste for what is fine and pleasing in human art.

And, lastly, it is to be remembered,—that pleasure should not be considered as *an end* valuable on its own account,—but rather as a means of preparing

our nature for those active and higher exertions which are truly constituent of its dignity and excellence.

These principles being admitted,—it is impossible not to dwell with satisfaction on the contemplation of the scenes which are often presented by this portion of the day;—and, perhaps, it is in the contemplation of such scenes that we chiefly see the advantages which spring to men from civilized and refined life. A well-supplied, but moderate and elegant table,—domestic endearment, in its most refined and tender forms,—social intercourse with others,—the charms of conversation, as it happens to turn either on the business of the day, the events of the neighbourhood, the productions of literature, or the models of art,—good humour and gaiety throughout,—and the charms of music, and of all the other productions of art,—constitute altogether the materials of a picture, which may be found,—not merely in occasional instances,—but in innumerable forms, in every city,—and over all the haunts of polished and civilized life,—and which seems better fitted, perhaps, than any thing else to remind us,—to what forms of elegance the social intercourse of men is capable of arriving,—and how

much true happiness is characteristic of the human condition.

In order, then, that this season of the day may be enjoyed in its utmost perfection,—the following things are requisite:—

First,—that the repose and animal gratification of the hour should be sought, not for themselves,—but as *a solace* from previous fatigue,—and should be regarded as a preparation for the higher duties which life demands.

Secondly,—that the *heart* and *fancy* should be called on to elevate and refine the gratifications of mere animal indulgence,—or that science and enlightened conversation should give occupation to the higher powers of intellect and reasoning.

And, lastly,—that when these pleasures are in their greatest abundance,—and in their most exquisite forms,—they should be sanctified by *gratitude* to the Fountain of all happiness,—by *submissive thoughts* respecting the transitory nature of human blessings,—and by a *kindly sympathy* with the fortunes of those whom the bounty of Providence has not so highly favoured.

In this manner, man will still be enabled to *consecrate* all his enjoyments,—and to sustain the char-

acter of a Living Temple,—even in those seasons when he seems to be chiefly seeking the indulgence of his own capacities of enjoyment.

The more active business of life, we formerly remarked, becomes hallowed by being done as a service appointed by God for the good of his kingdom;—and the hours even of social endearment,—of domestic love,— nd of animal gratification, become refined and *consecrated*,—by being enjoyed as "a season of thankfulness" to "the Giver of all good."

EVENING.—Nature herself, as in the other seasons of the day, has given to this portion of it a character which significantly points out the duties appropriate to it. The splendid light of day begins to decline;—a softer colouring spreads itself over the face of creation;—beauteous tints surround the path of the declining sun,—and heaven opens its resplendent glories to the eye and heart of man.

The general duty appropriate to this season, like that of the morning, is that of a careful *composing* of the mind after the tumult and irritation of the day;—but the morning, as we formerly remarked, speaks chiefly of labours about to be executed,—

while evening points more emphatically to those future and invisible issues to which all human labours are subservient.

This composing of the mind may, then, be best done by the following duties :—

First,—*serious meditation* on the wonderful ways of Divine Providence, and the mysterious course on which he has sent the highly-gifted race among whom we have our place.

Secondly,—careful *self-examination*,—or, as the beautiful maxim of Pythagoras expressed it,—" a conscientious review of the course we have pursued, and the failings of which we have been guilty, during the day that is about to close." The excellence of this maxim has commended itself to men of all times since it was first given by its illustrious propounder,—and it forms an admirable counterpart to the other maxim of the same philosopher,—to which we formerly adverted, and which recommended preparation for the duties and orderly arrangement of the business of the day by calm contemplation of " the regularity,—the serenity,—and the purity of the morning sky."

In the third place, *pleasing thoughts* respecting the beauty of Nature,—and enjoyment of those

lovely scenes, which the evening, in all countries, presents to the eye of man. This contemplation of the beautiful aspects of Nature may generally be best done by *solitary* musing;—but to those who have been agitated or depressed by the contentions of the day,—a more beneficial employment of the evening may sometimes be gained by a quiet enjoyment of rural wandering in the company of a friend. But, however indulged, this study of the aspects of Nature is one of the most healthful occupations, not for the body alone, but for the mind, in which we can be employed,—and the Author can state, from his own experience, that there is no occupation that will be recollected with more pure delight.

A valley of much simple,—but picturesque beauty,—a "long-withdrawing vale,"—as the poet has characteristically expressed it,—marked by hoary ruins at one extremity,—and stretching towards the other,—along the course of a winding stream,—into a fine expanse of open and variegated country, characterizes his home. The landscape is bounded, at some distance, by a range of elegantly-formed and finely-verdured hills;—the whole forming one of those interesting,—diversified,—and extensive prospects,—with a rich and deep-set foreground,—a

softer distance of wooded and upland country,—marked first by scattered country-seats,—and, farther west, by moorland farm-houses,—and, lastly, with the elegant but towering outline of its "boundary of hills,"—which can be imaged only by those who have been accustomed from infancy to the picturesque forms of Scottish landscape,—or who have, at least, inhabited some district where Nature assumes her bolder aspects,—and unites in her creative but fantastic moods, the grandeur of mountain-scenery with the rich setting of quiet valleys, or of softly-expanded landscape-views.

For years it has been the practice of the Author to enjoy the ever-changing beauty of this landscape, during a few moments of quiet contemplation, before beginning the business of the day,—and, indeed, in some of the first moments which the morning permits him to enjoy. And before "the shades of evening fall" on the landscape, the same indulgence of quiet meditation on the forms and colours of Nature is repeated;—no day, throughout the course of the year, presents the same aspect of this ever-lovely picture;—and whether these morning and evening studies be regarded as mere indulgences of taste,—as philosophical meditations,—or as pious

communings with Nature, the image and visible expression of Nature's God,—the Author cannot help stating in this public manner, that there are no hours of his life which return to him with such a fresh and fondly-cherished relish of enjoyment,—or which he is more anxious to bring before the notice of his readers,—as a sample of the manner in which every one of them may most profitably and delightfully spend some portion of the hours of every day. There is no person who may not find some aspect of Nature, around his home, which may thus bring to him many "sweet and healthful thoughts,"—and the remembrance of which may be a source of satisfaction and of great endearment to him,—throughout all the future years of his life.

It is much to be regretted that the practices of refined life have obtruded so deeply on this valuable portion of the day,—by indulgences that are not suited to it;—and that the custom of late dining prevents so many persons from availing themselves of a source of satisfaction and a means of improvement which would far more than compensate for any

pleasures of a merely animal kind, which its enjoyment might require them to forego.

In fact, good men of all times have delighted to consecrate this portion of the day to such exercises as we have been recommending;—and especially those moralists, whose works have made the most lasting impression on the world, have strongly urged such an employment of it,—and have exemplified it by their own daily practice. Those who are acquainted with the "Life of Fenelon" will recollect what value he attached to this duty;—many of the ancient moralists have eulogized the beautiful maxims of the Pythagorean school which have a reference to this topic;—and the pious and excellent Gerson has recorded,—that "the season of evening is especially propitious to composure and to solemn thought,—because it is that season of the day which is marked by the most beautiful colours,—which shows nature in the softest colouring,—and which is least exposed to those agitations which arise from the vain-glory of the world."

With most men, indeed, the evening is even a season of more perfect stillness and freedom from irritation than the morning;—and it is, hence, the more to be regretted that bad habits, contracted

during the agitations of the day,—and the trenching of one part of its duties on another should so generally preclude the indulgence of those pleasing and healthful thoughts which this "calm hour of day" is fitted to suggest. The value of these, however, is too inestimable to be thus foolishly abandoned,—and all those who regard the improvement and the true enjoyment of their nature as they deserve to be regarded, ought to make it their study to avail themselves of advantages, which, during the progress of life, they will find to be invaluable.

In the fourth place,—we have remarked that what chiefly characterizes the evening, and especially distinguishes its aspect from that of the morning, is the tendency which it has to lift the mind to *thoughts of immortality*,—or to the anticipation of those wonderful changes which the kingdom of God, —of which we have been permitted to see a small but lovely portion,—has yet to undergo, both in its manifestations on the face of this earth,—and amidst those greater scenes with which this earth is in intimate, though invisible connexion. Indeed, it is pleasing to think how regularly Nature suggests these thoughts, by the appearances which characterize the "close of a day;"—and how much, con-

sequently, it seems to have been her purpose to keep man at all times in mind of the wonderful things which are yet to follow his apparently unimportant and short-lived exertions.

Such thoughts are the sublimest,—the most pleasing,—and the most useful of all others,—and their indulgence is one of the most important duties appropriated to this season of the day.

In the last place,—the day ought to be concluded, as it was begun,—by an *act of piety*,—that is to say, by devout perusal of the Word of God,—and by humble prayer for his protection and blessing. Such exercises are not only the highest duties but the noblest privileges of man,—and no day can be considered as suitably spent that has not been consecrated by such exercises.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS RESPECTING THE CONDUCT OF AN ORDINARY DAY.

The foregoing outline of the method of employing the different seasons of the day has probably had a reference chiefly to those who are engaged in the details of business, and who have a definite round

of duties to fulfil,—and which they can arrange at their own choice. It must be remarked, however, that the Author has not aimed at giving rules applicable to *all the hours* of the day, after the manner either of the ancient Pythagoreans, or of the ascetic Authors of the scholastic times,—because he writes neither for the use of a philosophic sect, nor for those who aim simply at the cultivation of devotional or religious habits. He has merely given *an outline* which may be filled up according to the circumstances of different persons,—and in this view the following observations must be kept in mind:

In the first place, mankind consist not simply of those devoted to business,—and having a definite round of occupations to perform;—nor are these even who are thus busily employed all occupied in a similar way.

Some men have not business but study as their occupation; some have the management of public concerns,—and others have the care chiefly of private and domestic interests;—with a great multitude, bodily labour is the duty imposed on them;—and in almost every society there are persons who have the disposal of their time entirely at their own choice,—and who are at liberty to find out for them-

selves, from day to day, in what manner their hours shall be spent.

The same *precise routine* cannot, therefore, be prescribed to each of these;—but yet all of them may avail themselves of the *foregoing outline*, which is suggested by Nature herself,—and ought to adopt it with such accommodations as their peculiar circumstances render necessary or expedient.

In the second place, no routine ought to be considered *so fixed and unchangeable* as to prevent us from embracing any call to active and important duty which the changing events of life may present to us. Such calls will occasionally be made to every man, even to those whose day is most at their own disposal;—and it is weakness, and an evil habit, to be so wedded to our forms, as to refuse to exert ourselves cheerfully and vigorously when any serious and pressing call is made on our activity. This is a rule against which methodical men are apt to offend, and which is therefore the more necessary to be pressed on their attention.

In the third place, a *variety* of occupations,—active exertion and study,—labour and relaxation,—ought to form part of the routine of every day.

Those who are intent upon the *business* of life

are apt sometimes entirely to neglect the cultivation of their minds by *reading or study*;—and, on the other hand, those who are devoted to *study* sometimes neglect *wholesome exercise*, or contract an unwillingness to active exertion. But a man who would spend his day in the best manner, ought to elevate and purify his mind by mixing business with study;—and the meditative ought to settle it as a rule with themselves to devote some portion of their day to needful and salutary recreation.

Nor should such recreation be considered as *lost time*, or unworthy of being viewed as a service due to God. On the contrary, such relaxation being needful for the proper discharge of more serious duties, ought to be viewed as *sanctified* by the good end for which it is designed, and cheerfully indulged in from this conviction. Even in the enjoyment of innocent amusement, man may still preserve himself a "Living Temple," and have his whole day *consecrated* to the will of God. It is a miserable and bad habit of thought which precludes any person from the indulgence of this source of satisfaction even during his hours of amusement.

In the fourth place, the great purpose of this treatise is to show that man may at all times so ar-

range his conduct as to maintain that character of a "Living Temple" to which we have now alluded,—and also to evince that there is a style of acting which every man may point out to himself, quite sufficient to satisfy him that he is *making the most of the circumstances in which he is placed*,—and consequently to relieve his mind from the depressing anxiety which is so often felt from the apprehension, that we are called to the pursuit of a good which is abstract and imaginary, and with which the ordinary occupations and amusements of life are so far from being in harmony, that they are altogether in opposition to its character, and interruptions to its prosecution.

It is obviously of great moment that men should be able to state with themselves that mode of acting, or that distribution even of the particular portions of their day, by the observance of which they know that they are employing themselves so as to realize the injunction of living a "good life;"—and that they should thus be freed from the painful anxiety,—so common with sensitive and well-disposed minds,—of being in pursuit of a good of which they have no distinct conception,—and from the attainment of which they are precluded by even the

necessary cares and innocent relaxations of ordinary life. Perhaps no habit of thought is more to be desired than that which should subvert this vague feeling, and substitute in its place the conception of a style of acting *conformable to the circumstances in which men are placed*, and which they are individually in a capacity to realize.

It is commonly said, however, that it is not possible for us to look back upon any portion of time, —not even upon the events of any one day,—without many painful feelings from a sense of our imperfections, or without a general dissatisfaction with the course we have followed.

This, however, it may be observed, would be the case, even *after the best-spent day* that it is possible to conceive a human being to go through. It is a feeling which results from the very nature of man, and from the place which he occupies in the kingdom of God;—and it merely implies that happiness, that is, unmingled happiness, is not the lot of man, even while performing or recollecting the best series of duties he is capable of fulfilling. The fact, however, is commonly so stated as to confound the me-

cessarily *imperfect nature* of man, and of all his enjoyments,—even his most virtuous enjoyments, —with the recollection of *positive* and *voluntary guilt*.—Even one day spent in a course of well-doing, is invaluable to the feelings of him who has passed through it,—but it must be remembered, that, in the order of nature, important results are only gained, not by single acts, but by *habits of action*;—and a *course of conduct* regulated on the principles we have been endeavouring to enforce, would not fail to bring the purest peace into the bosom of him who had been so fortunate in his life,—and to reward him with many blessings which would "crown" his days with "glory and honour."

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OR OCCASIONS OF REJOICING SHOULD BE SPENT.

In the preceding section we have given the description of a day supposed to be undistinguished by the occurrence of any unusual events,—a day such as forms the ordinary course of life,—and by the rules of which accordingly the general tenor of life may be regulated.

But there are times when this ordinary routine is varied to every man by the occurrence of more remarkable events;—and, in the first place, there are times when men are disposed to *rejoice* with their friends,—or to express their thankfulness for the good that has befallen them, or for the continued repose which they have enjoyed,—times when the heart is opened by a desire to make others partake of the bounty we have experienced,—and when, in this

communication of our joy, we seek for ourselves that addition to our happiness which arises either from a public expression of it, or from participating it with others.

There are few men so poor as not occasionally to be able,—or so wedded to their selfish gratifications as not sometimes to feel the desire,—to make a feast for their friends, or to give some other token of their liberality and satisfaction.

There are few men, however, who are able to conduct themselves on such occasions with that degree of propriety which is desirable, or which is best fitted for giving effect to their liberality;—and it thus not unfrequently happens, that in those seasons of rejoicing are laid the seeds of many bitter fruits of repentance and of humiliation.

There are no seasons, at the same time, the due management of which is more graceful, or beheld with purer satisfaction by those who witness such management.

And there are none, by the becoming regulation of which a better proof is afforded of that true and well-ordered goodness, which has its seat in the deepest feelings, and in the most firmly-rooted habits of the human heart.

It is hence important that every man who would order his life aright should be prepared for the occurrence of such seasons,—and should have rules of conduct applicable to them,—from the observance of which no temptations of the moment may induce him to swerve. The general maxims, then, relating to such seasons are the following :—

In the first place,—it is good and graceful in our seasons of mirth,—or of festivity,—to enter with unaffected and heartfelt *gladness* into the joy of the time. When we have been blessed with prosperity, —or are, from any other cause, disposed to make a public acknowledgment of our joyfulness, nothing can be more absurd than to give to our conduct, in any of its expressions, an aspect of gloominess or of a want of due participation in the scene before us; —and, on the other hand, all men feel that there is great beauty and propriety in the conduct of him who conducts himself, on all such occasions, with that unaffected gaiety and innocent gladness of heart, which accord with the occasion on which these feelings are manifested.

Indeed, so much is this the case, that when it happens, as, amidst the uncertainty of human events, it sometimes does happen, that a secret and unex-

pected misfortune has occurred to him who had devoted the season to joy,—it is admitted to be a rule of just conduct, that his private feelings, unless when these are of a peculiarly tender kind, should give place to the destination of the time;—and he who so conducts himself as to hide his agony,—and to enter with full participation into the joys of his friends, is universally considered as having acted with a dignity and grace of the most estimable kind,—even when misfortunes of the most serious nature were known to himself to be impending over his lot.

But, in the second place,—while our joyfulness must be thus genuine, and suited to the time, it must on no occasion be inconsistent with the *respect* which we owe to ourselves,—or assume the character of extravagant and immoderate mirth.

It is not merely joy which men sometimes feel on such occasions;—for joy, when genuine and unaccompanied with other feelings, seldom leads to any extravagancies of conduct,—but it is undue excitement, arising from vanity,—from sympathy,—and from that recklessness of consequences which sometimes seizes the human heart when acting in the sight and under the influence of others;—and it is

hence that seasons of mirth so often degenerate into excesses which give no real satisfaction on the review of them,—but rather overwhelm with poignant humiliation those who are able to exercise their better feelings after the time of unrestrained mirth has passed.

Now, in order to avoid this,—and it is perhaps the rule of all others that is most important to be inculcated on this subject,—every man should endeavour to keep his mirth in moderation,—and, indeed, to give a just and well-regulated tone to all his feelings, when he is thus giving the reins to his thankfulness and joy. This moderation will not in the least detract from the true happiness of the time,—but, on the contrary, will promote it,—and be the best expression of its genuine character.

For the same reason,—all intemperance should be guarded against by rules, with the observance of which no temptation should be considered as authorising us to dispense. It is one of the best habits of the present times that it is favourable to the observance of this rule;—and there is, therefore, in the present state of society, not only moral guilt,—but bad taste in him who violates it.

It follows, from the same general rule, that we

should avoid, during our seasons of gaiety, all such expressions,—or symptoms of conduct, as betray the operation of ill-regulated feeling;—and that it should be considered as unsuitable to the due order of the season when we permit ourselves to lose that manly and well-adjusted moderation of language and of action, which, on occasions of less excitement, is considered indispensable to propriety of conduct.

In the third place,—our joyfulness in such seasons should be *sanctified* by a feeling of thankfulness for the good we have received,—and by a sense of our own unworthiness of our peculiar blessings. These feelings will dispose us to make public acknowledgment of our piety,—by those most becoming expressions of it,—with which the participation of the bounty of Providence is in all countries accompanied,—and will thus give to our joyfulness a far higher character than, without such feelings, it could have attained,—by making it a sacrifice of gratitude to the Giver of all good,—and a becoming testimony of the sense we entertain of his providential kindness.

In the fourth place,—our joyfulness should be characterized by a sense of the *passing nature* of all earthly blessings. This feeling of the insecurity

of our joys will be no incompatible accompaniment of the purest and most heartfelt thankfulness;—nor is there any thing in it that is unsuitable to that unaffected expression of gaiety which we have already recommended as appropriate to such occasions. On the contrary, it is most suitable to the *entire* circumstances of our condition at all times,—as beings,—who have not at any moment an entirely unmixed cup presented to us,—and who know not by what unforeseen events our brightest hours of joyfulness may be clouded;—and it is, accordingly, remarkable, that the songs of joy and of festive gladness that have made the deepest impression on the human heart,—and are preserved amidst its most imperishable treasures for all generations,—are uniformly those in which there is this becoming mixture of joy for the good we have experienced, and of submission to the possible decree which may soon doom our blessings to depart from us.

In the last place,—our joyfulness should be accompanied by a heartfelt *participation* in the sufferings,—or less-favoured circumstances of those who have not been equally distinguished by the bounty of Providence;—and he who sits down to his well-covered table, and amidst his rejoicing friends,—

with the secret consciousness that he has endeavoured to make others, who feel the hard pressure of affliction, less subject to sorrow,—will find, that the sweetest by far of all the ingredients of his cup, is the satisfaction which this consciousness of an active fellow-feeling with human suffering has infused.

Such are the rules or maxims relating to the due regulation of days or seasons of festivity,—and with respect to these rules the following general remarks are applicable:—

First, They are so far from being abridgements of our joyfulness,—that they are only fitted to preserve it in its true character,—and to render it more satisfactory, both at the time of its occurrence, and at every future hour in which it returns to remembrance. It is melancholy to think how seldom seasons of festivity are remembered with heartfelt satisfaction;—and it is equally true, that there is a pleasure of the purest kind attached to the recollection of those which have been kept in a proper spirit.

In the second place, the moderate, and thankful, and beneficent use of seasons of mirth, is our best

security for a blessing from Providence, guaranteeing to us the continuance of them ;—or, if other days and darker seasons should be awaiting us,—it will be a source of true satisfaction, to think that during our better hours we have not called down such reverses as a punishment for our sins,—by having abused our blessings when they were in our power.

And, lastly, it is by the observance of these rules, that, even in his seasons of gaiety, and when all solemn thoughts might seem to be farthest from his mind,—man may still conduct himself as " a Temple" dedicated to the service of his Creator ;—and may make his times of rejoicing, as well as the other portions of his life, " a sacrifice and an offering" which God will delight to accept. Man thus continues to be a " Living Temple."

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OF AFFLICTION SHOULD BE SPENT.

SUCH seasons are as much a part of the lot of man,—and as much require to be provided for as those which are characterized by gaiety or mirth;—for the former as well as the latter fall occasionally to the lot of every man,—and together they make up that wonderful discipline by which a wisdom far finer than our own is training us for purposes, the precise nature of which we are not at present able to fathom.

"In the day of prosperity," says the wise King, "be joyful,—but in the day of adversity consider." As there is then a *joy* which is natural and becoming in prosperity,—and which is even "well pleasing in the sight of God,"—so is there a quiet and solemn *pondering* on the dispensations of Providence,—

and a resolute but humble searching out of our own follies and sins, which are adapted to those seasons when a dark cloud seems to hang over our dwellings,—and to sadden all our paths.

In the first place,—even the *external expression* of conduct ought to correspond with the depth and solemnity of the feelings by which the heart, in such seasons, is agitated;—and as there is nothing more revolting than the behaviour of those who act, amidst afflicting circumstances, as if they had no perception of the evils that have overtaken them,—so the universal feelings of mankind have determined, that there is a propriety and beauty in the conduct of him,—who humbles himself, even in his outward conduct, under the hand of Providence,—and who is tenderly alive to those chastenings which come from a Being to whom it is the highest honour, even of the proud, to submit.

But, in the second place,—it is only on occasions of very great affliction, and during the first paroxysms of sorrow,—that even the maxims of the world permit us to become inattentive to the *ordinary duties and cares* of our condition. So far, indeed, is such neglect from being applauded, that it is considered as a mark of a well-ordered mind to be able,

even under the pressure of severe affliction, to discharge its relative and social duties with punctuality ;—and it is pleasing, in this manner, to find the *importance of these duties* recognized, and, indeed, their paramount obligation acknowledged, when the genuine feelings of the heart are called to determine respecting their comparative value,—notwithstanding the inferior rank to which they are sometimes lowered, by mistaken notions of what really constitutes the chief business of life. This decision of the unsophisticated feelings of the human heart is quite in accordance, as the reader will readily perceive, with the pervading strain of this Work.

But, in the third place, while the active and social duties are thus recognized, it is incumbent on those who are pressed by the hand of Providence to enter into *communion with their own spirits*, and reverentially to place themselves in an attitude of obedience to whatever the suggestions of Providence may point out as their duty. The season of affliction ought thus to be regarded as one in which God speaks more solemnly, by the dispensations of his Providence, than at other times ;—and man ought, in such seasons, to feel himself called to listen with

more than ordinary attention and humility to the voice which the wonderful ways of God seem to send forth.

So much for the *consideration*, or solemn searching out of our ways, which is enjoined by the Wise King, as suitable to seasons of peculiar trouble;—and, with respect to the *manner* in which the affliction itself, while it endures, should be borne, the following remarks may suffice:—

In the first place, it ought to be borne *firmly*;—that is to say,—with all the energy which the sufferer can put forth,—and, especially, with a belief that God will proportion our means of endurance to the severity of the trial to which he has seen fit to call us.

Secondly,—it ought to be borne *with patience*;—that is to say,—with a persuasion, that though it may continue longer than we had expected, or may have judged expedient, yet there *is* a time known only to God, which is the best for enabling it to effect the purpose which he has in view,—and that it is the duty of man to wait patiently till the "good time of the Lord shall come."

In the third place, it should be borne under a firm belief,—that no affliction is sent without some *good*

purpose for which it is adapted,—and that, though we may not be able, in all cases, to foresee the issue, —yet a fine and perfect wisdom runs throughout all seasons of suffering, as well as through those which, to our view, bear the most apparent marks of benevolence and loving-kindness.

So much with respect to the *spirit* in which afflictions should be borne. It is, lastly, our duty *to co-operate* with Providence in promoting the purpose for which sufferings are sent;—and this we may do,—by viewing them as intimations of the frailties and follies that have marked our lives,—and for the correction of which they were intended;—especially, for lessening any undue attachment to mere temporal things,—and for awakening in us the true and noble ambition of submitting ourselves implicitly to that course of discipline which God may see fit to send us, in the dispensations of his providence. Afflictions, when thus *improved*, naturally lead to the anticipation and hope of some more stable and perfect scene, where every thing, in our nature, which at present is but an expanding germ, shall ripen and "bear fruit in life everlasting."

Such is the manner in which affliction, or days of calamity, ought to be met;—and, in conclusion, it may be remarked, that the sorrow which is so borne loses by far the bitterest of its ingredients,—and, indeed, not unfrequently begets in the mind that "joy of grief," which is the style of feeling most suitable to the nature and condition of man, and with the indulgence of which all his best feelings are connected.

The affliction which is so borne is also the most likely to pass away;—at least, he who fails to make use of his sorrows for the purpose intended by Providence, has no reason to expect that the weight of his affliction shall be diminished till he has done *his* part in giving them their appointed efficacy,—while "a morning of great beauty and calmness" often succeeds to the dark hours of those who have endeavoured to be "fellow-workers with God" for their own good.

And, lastly, it is by thus bearing his sorrows, that man continues, even amidst their heaviest pressure, to maintain the noble character of a "Living Tem-

ple,"—or to make even his humiliations and his griefs "sacrifices of obedience," which are well pleasing in the sight of God.

IN WHAT MANNER DAYS OR SEASONS OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES OF EXTRAORDINARY EXERTION SHOULD BE EMPLOYED.

THE ordinary tenor of our days is not only varied by occasional seasons of joyfulness,—and by the occurrence of calamities which call for serious reflection;—there are also times in the life of every person, when a call seems to be made for more than common *activity* and *resolution*;—times when circumstances thicken around us,—and when we seem to be invited by the voice of Providence, speaking in the events of life, to abandon our ordinary and more indolent course, and to "gird ourselves" for duties that demand the exercise of all our vigour, or that can only be fulfilled by a temporary breaking in upon our usual habits of conduct.

When such seasons occur, the *timid* are apt to

shrink from the exertion which they require, from an apprehension that they may involve themselves in labours of dangerous tendency to their usual enjoyments.

The *indolent*, also, shun such calls to activity, as unsuited to those indulgences which they delight to secure,—and permit the time of exertion to pass, because they cannot summon up the resolution which is necessary to break their usual love of repose.

And men of *mistaken views of piety* not unfrequently overlook such calls, from a persuasion or indistinct belief, that their best course is to leave the issue of events entirely to the direction of Providence,—and to trust, that, notwithstanding their indolence, good will be made to come to them from all occurrences;—or, at any rate, that if evil is determined against them, their own labours are not sufficient to avert the mischief.

And, generally, there is a most erroneous impression in the minds of men,—that it is better to adhere to their usual inactive but settled habits, or to express their reliance on Providence by prayers and prostrations, than to interfere with such habits and such exercises, by rousing themselves to more than common activity.

In all of these ways, men mistake the true path which Providence points out to them, and act upon views of duty which are essentially defective and illusory.

For the true and safe rule of conduct, amidst all such occurrences, is that which directs us to hold ourselves in readiness for every active duty which may be presented to us by the events of life;—and to consider ourselves as offering, by such exertion, a better testimony of our loyalty to Providence than we could present by any *indolent* expressions of submission or confidence, which it is in our power to exhibit.

And, in order to perceive the force of this observation, it ought to be kept in mind,—that the occasions of peculiar activity to which we are now alluding commonly *involve issues* that are to affect the subsequent course of our lives during many days or years.

It may also be noticed, that those who have exercised the most wonderful command over the issues of events, have, in almost all instances, been men who knew how to avail themselves of such unusual combinations of circumstances.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that Providence demands our *co-operation*, in order to effect for us the

good at which the arrangements of his wisdom seem to aim;—or, in the more usual mode of expressing the same truth, that "Providence assists those who are best disposed to avail themselves, under his direction, of their own strength."

It is also part of the ways of God with man, that, in the ordinary course of things, many unsuccessful attempts are commonly made by those who are aiming at important results, before they are able to hit on the measures that are ultimately to fix them in their wished-for blessings;—and that it is not, usually, till we have shown a becoming disposition to exert all our own wisdom and means, that Providence reveals his own purposes by ways,—which sometimes seemed not the most likely to us to have been successful,—and at times to which we were least disposed to look for the fulfilment of our wishes.

Still, the rule of conduct is plain, and well established by all observation and experience of life,—that our previous exertions are indispensable to the good issue which Divine Providence intends to bring forth.

In availing ourselves, however, of our own active exertions for the successful management of impor-

tant combinations of circumstances, the three following conditions are implied:—First,—that we must aim at such things as are *suitable to our powers*,—and in accordance with our condition. Secondly,—that we must pursue these things by proper measures,—that is to say,—by such measures as are recommended by *prudence and propriety*;—and, thirdly,—that we must be *indefatigable* and *prompt* in the employment of these measures.

There is even a grace and beauty in a magnanimous attempt to realize objects of unusual importance, though our labour should be ineffectual, provided it be not apparent that we have far overrated our powers,—or pursued our purpose by ill-chosen means.

We repeat, then, that when a call to more than ordinary exertion is made to us by the events of life,—and such calls *are* occasionally occurring to all men,—the rule of conduct is, that we should be prompt and vigorous in using the activity which such occurrences demand,—and should have it impressed on our minds, as a principle of the utmost importance, that we ought not to consider either a regard to our more *usual habits* of action,—or a love of *indolence*, and dislike of agitating circumstances,—or

a mere *passive trust* in the guidance of Providence, —or our preference of *abstracted devotion*,—as in the slightest degree justifying us for neglecting the opportunity which has been presented to us of showing our loyalty by a more effectual and approved method.

In truth, such calls to active duty,—should be considered as a summons from the Sovereign Disposer to put ourselves in "an attitude" for filling those more trying posts by which the interests of his kingdom are to be promoted more effectually and extensively;—he, therefore, who refuses to listen to such calls is preferring his own ease or low notions of duty,—to the noble, though hard service to which his Master is calling him,—and for the honours of which he gives him an opportunity of contending;—while the man, on the contrary, who instantly throws aside all his own preconceived ideas and habits, and cheerfully advances to the post assigned him, is acting in the true spirit of a good subject of the kingdom of God,—and is promoting the interests of that kingdom in the most efficient and honourable manner.

By such activity, therefore, man still supports the character of a "Living Temple," or of a faithful

subject of the kingdom of God, even though his fulfilment of such duties should interfere with those more ordinary professions of veneration by which he delights to express his obedience or love.—" Nor," to use the admirable illustration of a most instructive writer, " would it be more absurd for a soldier to desert his post that he may lie lurking about his General's tent, lest he should lose his reverence by losing sight of him, than for us to neglect our active duties that we may attend more closely to those of devotion."

The truth is, that the most common soldier or sailor, engaged as they are in the management of concerns, where the value of active exertions are strongly made apparent by the dangers which result from the neglect of them,—and by the importance often of small instances of activity to the welfare of the whole arrangement, has, in what relates to their own profession at least, commonly far better ideas of what constitutes the true duty of man, than those entertained by persons, who, being involved in the great and variously-mixed business of the world, have frequently a less distinct view of the value of their individual exertions;—it is accordingly often most pleasant and animating to observe the alacrity with

which the first-mentioned persons generally proceed to the discharge of their duties, and the clear perception which they have of their importance;—and their example may, in this respect, be contemplated with great advantage by many who despise their scene of labour, or who fancy that their own situation and means of observation have given them far wider and juster ideas of human duty.

HOW SEASONS DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES SHOULD BE KEPT,—AND AS PRELIMINARY TO THIS, IN WHAT SENSE IT IS TRUE THAT RELIGION SHOULD BE MINGLED WITH ALL OUR CONDUCT.

No opinion is more commonly expressed by religious men, or inculcated by the public expounders of Christianity, than that religion should be connected with every part of our conduct,—should govern all our sentiments,—and be the principle of all our actions.

At the same time most men will feel that they have no very clear idea of the manner in which this union may be effected;—because religion and the ordinary affairs of life seem to be two things so unlike each other, and indeed so different in their nature, that though we may place them together, we cannot, it is supposed, ever make them to amalgamate.

And, in fact, the attempt to join them is commonly productive of a style of conduct which is in the highest degree fantastic and unnatural,—and fitted to revolt the minds of judicious persons against the very supposition of the possibility or propriety of such a mixture. This incongruity may be strikingly seen in the case of those persons who mingle the solemn duty of "singing praises to God" with their ordinary actions,—and more generally in the behaviour of a vast multitude of persons who are perpetually mingling the dogmas, or vague expressions of sentiment which belong to religion, with the discharge of their commonest duties, and with all the daily occurrences of life.

Now, in order to clear up this apparent incongruity, we must keep in mind, that the word religion, like almost all the other words in daily use, is of a vague and abstract character, and is occasionally employed to denote the three following things:—First, those *external forms* or expressions of conduct by which religious feelings are manifested;—secondly, those *opinions* or *dogmas* into which religious apprehensions are embodied;—and, thirdly, that feeling characteristic of man, and pervading all his nature, by which he is capable of everywhere per-

ceiving traces of a Divine mind, and of directing all his conduct with a view to the approbation of a Supreme Ruler.

If now we limit the signification of religion to the two first of these,—then, in the first place, there are a great many persons at all times to be found, who, being ardently devoted to the affairs of this world, and feeling the incongruity between these and the habitual recurrence of either the external forms of piety, or the sentimental maxims in which its feelings and opinions are embodied, rest in the belief that the two sorts of things have no relation whatever to each other,—that it is absurd to attempt to unite them,—and that as worldly affairs are evidently *their* proper sphere of action, they may devote themselves wholly to these, and give themselves no concern about those loftier or more sentimental views by which so many men seek to unite the things of time with the feelings that relate to eternity,—but by their attempts to unite which they only give a fantastic and unseemly character to their whole style of conversation and action.

On the other hand, there are men whose minds, from constitutional timidity or acquired opinions and habits, are deeply imbued with a feeling of the su-

preme importance of religious truth ;—but still, confining religion to the two former of the senses of the term already mentioned,—they blend its *forms* or *opinions* with all the conduct of life, and make thus a heterogeneous mixture or compound, of which all others perceive the incongruity,—but are unable to produce any thing like a complete union or identification of the subjects.

In both cases the difficulty arises from limited and erroneous views of what we are to understand by religion,—and from an attempt to reconcile it, under some of its aspects, with affairs to which it has only an affinity when taken in its entire and more comprehensive character.

If accordingly we take the term religion in this more general acceptation, as denoting the *feeling characteristic of man*, by which he is enabled to perceive a designing mind in all the events of nature,—and to refer all his conduct to the approbation of a Supreme Ruler,—then there is not only no difficulty or incongruity in the attempt to unite religion with our most ordinary transactions and feelings, nor do we form by their union, as in the former case, a merely heterogeneous mixture,—but the two things become finely and fully incorporated, and there is

produced a union or identification by which the characters of both are rendered more excellent and available. The affairs of life, on the one hand, are elevated into a higher and purer character,—and, on the other, Religion descends from her throne of clouds and darkness, and becomes the ruler of all that is fine in feeling, or beautiful in conduct, or magnificent in expectation.

Indeed the *whole* aspect of Nature and of life undergoes a most blessed change when this union has been effected;—the wide face of Nature assumes the aspect of a glorious scene on which the beneficent government of God is apparent,—all the rational beings that people this world appear under the character of subjects of one grand empire which the Creator is exercising over all worlds,—and the most common actions and feelings of life assume a lofty and fine expression as parts of the duty given to us by our Supreme Lord,—and by the due regulation and management of which we evince our loyalty to his service. A finer and richer colouring is thus thrown over the whole aspect of creation,—and things that before were disunited as of entirely incongruous kinds,—become incorporated into one grand and mutually pervading union.

Correct notions respecting the possibility of this union, and the means of effecting it, are by far the greatest improvement that can take place in the religious apprehensions of any individual,—or that could be given to the general sentiments of mankind.

And the actual union, in the case of any individual, forms by far the happiest and most desirable state of the human mind. In fact, it is only when this union has been effected, that man acts with the entire powers of his nature, and exhibits his characteristic feelings in their purest and happiest state.

It is accordingly, as the reader must have perceived, the primary purpose of this treatise to aid in the dissemination of notions calculated to produce this change in the religious apprehensions of men,—and, in so far as opinions are capable of influencing conduct, to lead to the desired union itself.

HOW FAR OUGHT THE MORE DIRECT EXPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS FEELING TO BE MINGLED WITH OUR ORDINARY CONDUCT.

In what we have said under the preceding section, we have considered religion or religious feelings as completely identified with our modes of thought and action in daily life,—giving to them a new and higher character,—and thus constituting, along with these ordinary actions, not *two things* placed side by side, but one fine and harmonious union,—beautifying and ennobling the whole aspect of life,—and springing up with freshness and freedom along with every movement of the heart and action of the conduct.

But, besides this most desirable union, it is also proper that *more direct* expressions of religious feeling should be mingled with our most common actions,—that thus the religious, the pre-eminently

religious, nature of man may be more distinctly acknowledged, and expressed by forms suited to it more exclusively.

Thus, the morning and evening prayer for assistance and protection ought not to be neglected by any person;—a devout acknowledgment before partaking of the bounty of Providence in our ordinary meals, is also a direct expression of religious feeling, of which men in all times and countries have recognized the propriety;—and, during the course of the day, occurrences will occasionally be intervening, which a well-disposed mind will gladly seize as most suitable to such an exercise of its characteristic and sublimest powers.—There are thus interesting changes in the life of every man, which more deeply affect all his powers of feeling,—and make him sensible, however high may be his station among his fellow-men, how much depends on the course which he takes, and what need he has of Divine assistance and protection,—that he may fully realize the magnificent though mysterious promises of his spiritual nature. All such occurrences are most suitable for direct expressions of religious submission, or thankfulness, or trust.

In some countries and ages, religious services of the kind now alluded to have been more common

than in others,—and the southern nations of Europe,—as well as the nations of heathen antiquity, seem to have mingled religion with more propriety and effect, with their ordinary avocations, than the more northern nations.

This, probably, has originated, to a great extent, at least, in the forms of their worship,—which are more favourable for such mixture with the transactions of the day;—for the fact is, that, in order to give any people an inducement and inclination thus to avail themselves of the direct forms of piety, these forms must be fitted for readily incorporating themselves with all the ordinary feelings and avocations of life,—and the *imagination* and *heart* must have much to do with forms that are fitted for this fine and salutary alliance. This, accordingly, was the character of the finely mythological religions of ancient times,—and this same character has been retained, along with many of the actual forms of heathen ages, in the religious rites that are characteristic of the nations of the more southern and luxuriant regions of Europe.

In our own country, and in some of the contiguous nations, religion has been divested of almost all this imaginative and symbolical character,—and, being reduced to a mere system of abstract doctrines

and theories, has little tendency to ally itself with daily occurrences,—or to be readily incorporated with the ordinary movements of the fancy or heart.

There can be no question, at the same time, that much superstition also is mingled with the symbolical ritual of southern nations,—and, perhaps, every religion which is chiefly characterized by this symbolical character, has a tendency to degenerate into superstition.

But the best form of worship, either for public adoption or for private use, would be that which should at once exclude all superstitious practices,—and so apply itself to the senses, and heart, and imagination of man,—as, by means of these, to be easily incorporated with daily feelings and occurrences,—and to give a finer and more spiritual character to these than they naturally, without such aid, are apt to assume.

It is pleasing, in those countries where the Papal religion still reigns, to see at all times the most magnificent of its temples open to the passer-by, where, amidst objects and associations fitted to impress his imagination and heart, he may pour out those devout feelings, which, in all well-disposed minds, will be occasionally excited, even amidst the bustle and

the temptations of the world. It is pleasing even to see the symbols of religious worship occurring, in such countries, by the wayside,—and the chapel and the crucifix recalling to the mind of the "wayfaring man" those sentiments of piety and trust, which, when left to its natural aspirations, the heart of man so readily and keenly embraces.

Our feelings of satisfaction are, no doubt, lessened by witnessing the degrading superstitions which are associated with such acts of homage;—but a feeling of regret must also be awakened, that, in our own country, and with purer notions of religious truth, so few opportunities are afforded to men of expressing their devout feelings,—and so few incitements to the indulgence of such sentiments.

But, when the religious forms of any country are not favourable to the indulgence of such exercises, a good man ought to make opportunities of indulging them for himself;—and the direct services of piety might thus, with much advantage, be mingled far more frequently than they are with our most common avocations,—or, at least, might blend their influence most happily with the occurrence of those more touching events which life is occasionally presenting to every human being.

HOW THE SABBATH-DAY OUGHT TO BE SPENT.

However far men may be disposed to separate the common business of life from that pure and high feeling which ought to pervade and dignify all such occupations,—and however neglectful they may be of the direct services of piety during the progress of ordinary events,—it is yet instructive and pleasing to remark,—that the religious nature of man has been so felt in all countries and times,—that no people or nation has wanted days expressly appropriated to Divine services,—and sanctified by a spirit of piety and holiness.

Even heathen nations had such days;—and these were plentifully intermingled with the ordinary course of events,—and had, in many respects, a good effect upon the character and feelings of those who availed themselves of them.

But the Christian Sabbath is, of all the institu-

tions that have been established with this view,—by far the finest and most valuable in many respects,—the most pervaded by grand and affecting associations,—the most happily characterized by the reasonable nature of the service which it prescribes, and the exercises to which it invites,—the most useful to all orders of living creatures,—and the best fitted, when duly improved, for diffusing many beneficial influences over the whole aspect of life,—and over the condition of all the varied ranks into which society is divided.

Yet there are two great misapplications of the nature and purpose of this day, of which men are apt to be guilty,—and with respect to which it is consistent with the purpose of this treatise that some observations should be made.

In the first place,—there are men, who, without denying the excellence of the Sabbath,—are yet so immersed in the business of life, that they cannot divest themselves of its cares and pursuits even during this holy day;—they have acquired habits during the busier portions of their lives, which attend them even during those seasons which should be set apart for devotinoal duties;—and, with the usual perversity of mankind, when their affections or habits are

strong, they fancy that they can perceive many reasons sufficient to exempt *them* from those duties of piety, for the performance of which they yet believe this institution to be generally valuable.

It is deeply to be regretted, that in every Christian country,—and among those orders of society which are in other respects most exemplary and respectable,—a great multitude of men are to be found, who are guilty of this error,—and who, not unfrequently, live in a perpetual struggle between their impressions of duty regarding this day,—and the force which their habits of business have acquired for drawing them aside from duty. They commonly, however, seek peace to their minds by some appearances of reasoning;—and the three following grounds of excuse are usually resorted to by them, as apologies for their conduct.

In the first place,—they insist that there are duties,—or affairs of ordinary life, so important, that even religion justifies the neglect of the services of piety, when such pressing affairs are to be discharged;—and they naturally apply this reasoning with full force to *their own* circumstances, and maintain, that the business *they* have to transact is exactly of this urgent and indispensable kind.

In the second place,—they maintain, that religious services are of no use or importance, but in so far as they have a tendency to lead to a correct and faithful performance of the common duties of life; —and, as *they* are busied in such duties, they think they cannot be considered as guilty of any great impropriety, if, in neglecting the mean, they are wholly given to the attainment of the end, for which only, according to their theory, the mean is valuable.

And, as a natural consequence of these suggestions, they hold, in the last place,—that the Sabbath was primarily and chiefly intended for the use of the great multitude of mankind,—of those portions of society, whose opportunities of knowing their duty, or wishes to perform it, are of a very slender kind, and easy to be perverted or overlooked,—while they themselves are entitled to maintain, that they have both just apprehensions of what they ought to do, —and feel every desire to do their part in the business of life with assiduity and good faith. The Sabbath, then, though valuable to the "man-servant or the maid-servant," has small claims,—they venture to believe,—on those whose minds are enlightened by science, or who are busied in the great and liberalizing transactions of public life.

Now, with respect to the first of these reasons, we admit that there *are* duties of so pressing a nature, that Religion herself justifies the omission of her services,—when these duties demand to be fulfilled;—but we maintain, at the same time,—that such duties are not of *frequent* occurrence in the course of affairs,—and that, if the neglect of which we complain were confined to the times when such events have actually occurred, there would be no appearance of a want of duty in the conduct of men, —nor any ground for insisting that the sanctity of the Sabbath had sustained a violation. If only the man who has such *indispensable* duties to fulfil needed to be justified, and all but those who had affairs to manage which could not be postponed were faithful to their obligations, we should have reason to rejoice, that this great appointment of Divine wisdom and love was met by the united gratitude and veneration of the whole multitude of mankind.

And with respect to the second objection, it proceeds on the supposition that religious services are *only* valuable in so far as they have a tendency to lead to a faithful discharge of ordinary duties.—The reader must be aware, that in that portion of this Work, in which we treated fully of Divine

services, we have endeavoured to put these duties in a different and higher light;—they are, as we there showed, *direct* expressions of our religious nature, or sentiments and feelings,—of those parts of our nature which give to us our pre-eminent and characteristic place in life,—and by which we are allied with a world more august and spiritual than that in which we act, and are enabled to put ourselves into the highest of all attitudes, that of "communion" with the great Source of all good. That religious duties derive *all* their excellence and obligation from their influence on other and more common duties, is by no means a full or just statement of their nature; —and it is from a misapprehension of this kind that so many respectable men fail to perceive the truly grand nature of such services, or willingly become the slaves of inferior pursuits, while they have an opportunity afforded them by Divine Providence itself, and associated with all touching and noble recollections, of recognizing the higher and holier nature which they bear,—and of availing themselves of the pre-eminent *privilege* to which its services summon them. In one word, the man who neglects his religious duties for the common affairs of life, is sinking by far the grandest part of his nature in his

love for pursuits that ally him only with an inferior order of events,—and while his head is surrounded by "a diadem," is consenting to become a slave.

And if this be the true account of our religious duties, then it is futile to insist that the most solemn services of Piety, or her most beautiful institutions, were intended only for the lower orders of men; —for the highest intellect has still to acknowledge, that it is its capacity of feeling its relation to God that constitutes by far its proudest honour,—and that any neglect of this, or of the services which it enjoins, is treason against our noblest privilege, and a disdain of our truest happiness.

It would, then, be of great use for all such men to impress deeply on their minds the following plain principles, which result from what has now been stated.

In the first place, that they have been in a mistake in supposing that religious services are of *no* use or excellence but for their influence on the performance of common duties,—for these services are expressions of the highest and most glorious portion of our common nature.

In the second place, that they have not seen such services in their true nature when they regarded them simply as *duties*,—for they are, in truth, the

highest *privileges* and *honours* which man enjoys; —and are not less honourable to the most exalted intellect, than to minds of the humblest attainments.

In the third place, that no men need the refining influence of such services more than themselves;—for business and the ordinary affairs of life are evidently engrossing their thoughts,—and they ought to be thankful that Providence has put it in their power, amidst so many causes of degradation, still to revert to their highest feelings, and to secure for their nature that cultivation which religious services are so well fitted to afford to all men,—but more especially to those whose hearts and imaginations, during their more common days, are so apt to be entirely occupied with the low and vexatious cares of this transitory life.

In the fourth place, that the more eminent their place in society,—and the more extensive their influence, the greater are their obligations to set an example of all fidelity in the keeping of this holy day to those whose minds and conduct must be much influenced by the example of their superiors.

And, in the last place, that, by neglecting the Sabbath, and its holy and purifying influences, they are denying themselves some of the *purest satisfac-*

tions that belong to human nature,—are depriving themselves of many advantages for the dignified and becoming discharge of ordinary duties,—and are laying up for themselves regrets which every good man would avoid, when life shall be to them but a subject of review, and when their happiness or misery will depend on their consciousness of the manner in which they have fulfilled all its requisitions.

We have judged it proper to state these considerations more particularly, because the evil they are meant to correct is one which unquestionably prevails among persons engaged in the business of life to a melancholy extent,—and because we are satisfied that many of these are persons of such respectable characters, and, in other respects, of so just a sense of duty, that they would instantly and eagerly adopt a different course of conduct, if the views which have now been stated, and which run through the other parts of this Work, were made familiar to them.

We have now, however, to address a word or two to men of a different character.

If there are many men who, from false views of

the nature of religious services, think themselves justified in neglecting them, or at least the seasons more expressly consecrated to their fulfilment, that they may devote themselves to those secular interests, from their influence on which they suppose such services to be alone important,—there are other men whose minds, from constitutional tendencies or early and long-continued impressions, are so sensitively alive to the supreme importance of pious services, that they can permit no recreation, however innocent in itself, to mingle with the days devoted to piety;—their Sabbaths accordingly become, from an overstrained indulgence in devotional duties, seasons of gloom and of any thing but cheerful enjoyment;—and other men, who witness their austerity, are deterred from imitating their fidelity, lest they, too, should be led into the same extravagance of devotion.

Now, all such persons should be made to understand, that the devotional feeling is of such a kind, that it cannot be maintained for any length of time in a state of intensity,—and that any attempt to prolong such services, throughout all the hours of a day, is founded on mistaken notions of the capabilities of human nature,—of the character of the reli-

gious feeling,—and of the duty required by the institution of holy days.

It is of importance also to press on the consideration of such persons,—that no piety can be genuine in its kind, or acceptable to God, which is not *cheerful* and improving to all the kindly feelings of our nature,—that God "delights in mercy rather than sacrifice,"—and that nothing is more explicit in the discourses of the Founder of Christianity, than his declarations, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,"—and that in everything "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day."

It ought farther to be stated to such persons, that there are many exercises which, though not *strictly* devotional, are yet in most beautiful harmony with that state of mind which enlightened devotion inspires,—and by which exercises the hours of the Sabbath may be employed, not only so as to maintain all its sanctity, but to render it an occasion of the most delightful and improving satisfactions. Everything that binds us more strongly to our fellow-creatures,—that strengthens our natural love of our relations,—that enables us to do good to the distressed,—the ignorant,—or the young,—or generally to promote the growth of "good-will to men,"—is

of the kind here alluded to;—and, to a mind that relishes such delights, the hours of the Sabbath will not be too long for a full participation of them.

In the last place, it may be stated generally, that he best fulfils the purpose of the Sabbath, who, while he devotes a suitable portion of that day to the public and private services of devotion, can yet so employ the remaining portion of his time, as to intermingle with these devotional duties such relaxations as, without partaking of the nature of ordinary business, have the best tendency to awaken in the mind all those soft and grateful emotions which bind man more strongly and willingly, both to the Giver of all good,—and to the interests of those with whom he is connected in life.

These are exercises which will render the Sabbath a day not of gloom, but of pure enjoyment;—and the best mode of giving it this character may be left to the good sense and enlightened feelings of each individual. It is sufficient for us to have described the manner in which the "day of rest" may be spent not only devoutly, but with true and animated cheerfulness.

SEASONS OF MORE THAN ORDINARY SOLEMNITY, THAT IS, SEASONS DEVOTED TO THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LEADING FACTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

It is justly insisted on by pious men, that the *peculiarities* of the Christian doctrine ought to form the principal subjects of meditation with men at all times, or ought to be incorporated with all their habits of thinking and of feeling.

And it is interesting to remark, that these peculiarities, as they are presented by Christianity in its original form, are set before us in a shape which of all others best adapts them to become subjects of our daily contemplation.

For, in the first place, it is simply as *facts* that they are there presented to us,—not as doctrines which derive their complexion from the varying tastes and understandings of men,—and which can never,

even when best founded, have the same direct application to life and conduct which is possessed by facts.

It is farther to be remarked, that these facts formed the leading features of *a life*, not different from that of mankind in general, but rather bearing the most interesting features of our common life more deeply and instructively stamped on it;—it was a life spent amidst humble circumstances,—in labour, and privation,—amidst opposition from man,—and during long years of protracted expectation, only deepening in its horrors, as years rolled over it,—terminated apparently amidst great disaster, procured by adherence even to a righteous cause,—yet finally raised from this apparent ruin,—and advanced to unparalleled "glory and honour" in the kingdom of God.

These facts are thus connected with the most touching recollections and hopes that can occupy the heart and imagination of man;—they awaken thoughts of the wonderful circumstances amidst which the struggle of life is ordered for all the children of men,—of that Divine pity which has looked in mercy on the sinful and suffering condition in which human nature is placed,—of the duty of steadfast adherence to conscience even though death

itself should seem to be the inevitable consequence of our steadfastness,—and of the wonderful things which are in store for those who fail not in their obedience.

Now, all of these considerations show us how finely the *peculiarities* of the Christian faith are fitted to be the daily subjects of our meditations,—and with what a direct power they apply themselves to all the most interesting thoughts that can be awakened in the heart and imagination of man during his progress through this "vale of tears."

These peculiarities, also, which are thus adapted to be the subjects of our daily meditation, ought, consequently, to be so employed, in all public ministrations, even on ordinary Sabbaths,—as to colour and give interest to all the other views of duty which it may be the business of the preacher to present;—and it is not without reason that there is a prejudice in the minds of the generality of Christians against any exhibitions of duty which leave topics of such interest altogether untouched.

Indeed, from the earliest ages of the existence of Christianity, these grand facts of the history of its Founder were incorporated with the usual services of all the churches,—and the ritual of all countries

that had embraced the faith of Christ was arranged with reference to these facts. The whole year was thus a continued commemoration of the leading events of our Saviour's life;—and his birth,—his baptism,—his temptation,—his transfiguration,—his death,—his resurrection,—his ascension,—and all the other intervening facts of his history, were celebrated in services, often excellently adapted to give these events a deep and lasting hold of the imaginations and hearts of Christians.

It cannot but be matter of regret, that in some of the most enlightened churches of modern times this fine arrangement of the public services of the sanctuary has been neglected;—and that the minds of Christians are more occupied with *dogmas* derived from the *peculiar philosophical views* which interested the thoughts of the founders of these churches, and which are, in most instances, by no means of the most just or luminous kind,—than purified by the remembrance of those transcendently-beautiful and instructive facts which formed the leading events in the life of Christ.

But however this may be, there never has been a church which did not so far feel the pre-eminent solemnity of some of these facts as to have services

set apart for the direct commemoration of them;—and especially the central and leading fact of this most wonderful history,—that is to say, "the death of Christ,"—has at all times been commemorated according to the positive commandment of our Lord,—by the most holy service which the Christian community can celebrate.

It is important also to remark, that the thoughts which this fact is fitted to awaken are not such as terminate in the fact itself;—for that fact was but the central event of an economy which embraces the previous dispensations of Divine Providence from the beginning of the world,—and which has continued, ever since Christ died, to extend blessings consequent on his coming to all succeeding generations;—so that, in celebrating that event, we are naturally led to thoughts respecting the wonderful dealings of God with men in all ages preceding the coming of the Saviour,—to thoughts also relating to the infinite mercy and compassion displayed in the Divine dispensations towards a race of beings who bear habitually about with them the consciousness of sin,—and to thoughts respecting the great things which are yet to be the portion of our race during the future revolutions of the great kingdom of God.

It is much to be regretted that these grand peculiarities of the Christian faith are not thus presented to us *simply as facts* leading to such recollections and such hopes, rather than under the form of doctrines shaped by the fancy of men,—and deriving their complexion from the limited views of the times when they were first formed;—because, though it is impossible to reconcile the minds of any number of thinking men to precisely the same view of any merely technical doctrine,—there is no well-disposed mind that would not instantly admit the singular beauty and grandeur of *the facts* which compose the life of the Founder of our faith,—and the supreme interest of those recollections and hopes which these facts are fitted to awaken in every human heart.

Indeed, so general is the impression of the grandeur and interest of these facts, and of the meditations which they involve,—that there are in all Christian countries many persons of all ranks, who, though neglectful of the more common services of the sanctuary, yet feel all their reverence and devotion awakened when the more solemn seasons of communion return,—and who would shudder at the idea of being thought incapable of appreciating the "awful beauty" of that divine interposition by which

"God was made man and dwelt among us;"—or of feeling the many touching thoughts which are necessarily associated with the remembrance of this event.

There are other men, however, whose minds are differently affected,—and who, though they support the authority of the established forms of worship on ordinary Sabbaths, are yet afraid so to pledge themselves to the more peculiar tenets of their faith, as to partake of the most holy and solemn of its institutions.

In general it may be stated, that when this feeling arises from views which have been embraced by the *understandings* of those who so act, it is chiefly to be ascribed to the perverted aspect which their conceptions of Christian doctrine have assumed from the erroneous mode in which their education has been conducted,—from their associating with the peculiarities of Christianity, dogmas which have their origin exclusively in the caprice and limited views of men;—and there is perhaps no man of a sound mind who would not instantly admit the beauty and interest of all the peculiarities of our faith, if these were presented to him in their native form,—who would not feel his obligation to perform all the services which are supposed to be connected with the commemoration of these peculiarities.

What enlightened or well-disposed man doubts that the ways of Divine Providence have been of a very wonderful and gracious kind towards the human race in all the ages of their existence,—who does not admit,—that the consciousness of guilt is the greatest of all the burdens by which the heart of man is oppressed,—and that the good news of Divine forgiveness is consequently the most blessed that ever was published on earth,—who refuses to acknowledge that the most solemn of all the duties which man has to fulfil, is that of devoting himself to the service of his Creator, by a life of purity and charity,—or who does not feel that his greatest source of thankfulness is that of being permitted to anticipate for himself some glorious fate, during the wonderful changes which the progressive kingdom of God is yet to undergo?

These, however, are precisely the views which the peculiar facts of the Christian faith were meant to substantiate;—and he who is willing to offer unto God thanksgiving for these recollections and hopes,—is, in fact, willing to do every thing for the celebration of which the most solemn festivals of the Christian church have been instituted.

It would be well if men of liberal or philosophical

views would take this mode of considering the meaning of the services prescribed by the solemnities of our faith;—for there is assuredly no well-disposed man, who, with such views of the meaning of these services, would not consider them as the most becoming and interesting in which human nature can be employed.

All Christian men, accordingly, will be disposed to keep holy, with every preparation of the heart and life, those solemn seasons,—when the great peculiarities of their faith are commemorated;—the season devoted to such services will be considered by them as among the happiest and most delightful which they meet with;—and the experience of all past ages justifies us in saying,—that those who so keep these holy seasons,—will be disposed to speak of the satisfaction received from them, and of the benefits to their spiritual and moral nature which they have occasioned,—with the most grateful and fervent remembrance.

In fact, the virtues cherished or called into exercise by these seasons, lie at the foundation of all the characteristics of the Christian life;—for he is

not a Christian in the highest and holiest sense of the term,—who is not animated by a profound admiration of the gracious purposes and dispensations of Divine Providence towards the human race,—who is not disposed to view the Founder of his faith, in that truly-august light in which he is represented as also the Author of salvation to all who believe in him,—as the Saviour,—the Redeemer,—the Mediator between God and man,—and who does not habitually exercise that trust,—and gratitude,—and love which are due to a Being who holds so important a place in the plans of Providence,—and who has been the source to this world of such unspeakable blessings.

Now, these are precisely the graces which are chiefly called into exercise by such seasons of public solemnity,—dedicated as such seasons are to the remembrance of the great facts of the history and life of Christ;—and it is hence that it is so momentous to the nourishment of the Christian life in the hearts of men,—that these seasons should be met by careful preparation,—and observed with solemn reverence.

DAYS SET APART BY PRIVATE CHRISTIANS FOR A REVIEW OF LIFE.

We have no word in our language which expresses directly the peculiar character or purpose of such days,—or seasons. In another of the languages of modern Europe they are designated by the very expressive title of "thoughtful days,"—or days of thought,—(denk-tage),—and this name will sufficiently point out the particular kind of days to which we are at present alluding.

In all ages the eminently wise and good have been in the habit of keeping such days;—and it is scarcely possible to conceive any thoughtful man,—who does not feel a desire occasionally to seize such seasons for a review of the wonderful events which have characterized his life.

Indeed, the keeping sacred of such seasons has an obvious foundation in the circumstances in which

man is placed,—and in the solemnity of the recollections which the progress of events is constantly awakening in the minds of all who pass through life with becoming consideration.

For, in the first place, who has not been guilty of many violations of duty during the past portions of his life,—and who, accordingly, is not disposed to look back on his history with a melancholy feeling of the weakness of all human resolutions,—and the instability of all human virtue? The first kind of such seasons of remembrance may accordingly be stated to be those which are set apart for a review of the *errors* of life;—and it is good for man thus occasionally to bring his faults and failures before the view of his mind,—for there are many *virtues* most suitable to the condition of man, and of great moment to the well-being of his nature, which such a review of his failings is fitted to cherish.

Sorrow for his offences,—humility, or a becoming sense of his own weak and dependent condition,—thankfulness for Divine forbearance,—trust in Divine mercy,—and a just apprehension of the wonderful provisions which Divine wisdom and love have made for the salvation of man,—are the virtues awakened by such a review of our sins,—and these

are all of them virtues most suited to the condition of man,—and the sources to him of many excellencies of conduct.

Indeed, it is the peculiar effect of such a review of our sins, that they bring strongly home to our minds this most interesting and beautiful consideration, that we live in a "kingdom of grace" or of forgiveness,—in a portion of the Divine dominions over which the "tender mercy" of God is especially visible,—and where our best-founded hopes must rest on the provisions made by Divine love and pity for our redemption, considered under the peculiar character of beings who have "offended,"—but to whom he is willing to extend "pardon."

Hence, the style of feeling that is most suited to man is that which *mingles* penitence with trust;—it is the feeling of beings who are conscious that they have "sinned,"—but who also are called to rejoice that "pardon" is offered to all who have offended.

The true *happiness* of life, as enjoyed by man, is said to be "the joy of grief,"—and the appropriate nature of the *virtue* of man is also of an analogous kind;—it is humility tempered by trust,—or penitence relieved and ennobled by the hope of forgiveness.

This is a view of the condition of man which is

full of the deepest interest;—it is hence that we see the propriety of humility,—and penitence,—and trust,—and tender apprehensions of Divine mercy, —as graces of the heart and life of man;—and it is hence also that we learn to view him under his peculiarly interesting relation of a subject of "the kingdom of grace,"—a subject of that department of the Divine dominions, in which pardon is offered to beings who feel that they have sinned,—but who are yet invited to rejoice that "peace and good-will have been proclaimed on earth." We shall have occasion again to advert to this very interesting topic.

It is sufficient at present to have noticed, that days appropriated to a review of the failings of our lives have a peculiar fitness for awakening and cherishing the virtues suited to a being who is so situated,—and who must derive from these virtues the most appropriate ornaments of his condition.

But, in the second place, our days of review may also be set apart for *thankfulness* on account of blessings we have received. There is, in fact, no man,—however sad may have been his lot in other respects, who has not some remembrances of "peculiar favour" manifested towards him by the kindness of Providence,—and it is becoming and good in all

men, therefore, to consecrate some seasons for the review and remembrance of such benefits.

The virtue or grace chiefly awakened by such remembrances, will, consequently, be gratitude;—but yet, even while indulging this grace,—the true nature of the condition of man as a subject of "the kingdom of grace" will become apparent,—and the sincerest thanksgivings will but make us more sensible how unworthy we have been of the kindness manifested towards us,—or how deeply we have offended by our sins against the goodness we have so richly experienced. Indeed, perhaps the human heart is never more disposed to feel its own unworthiness,—that is, to become sensible of its sins,—than at the very time when it is melted by the experience of the peculiar loving-kindness and providential bounty of God;—and thus the *mixed nature* of the feelings that are properly constituent of human virtue is again made apparent.

Our thanksgivings for mercies received will, indeed, often be for deliverances from the very effects or tendencies of our sins;—and thus it cannot but happen, that our very review of our deliverances must quicken our feeling of the inherent sinfulness,—and weakness of our nature.

It is good for man thus to mingle "trembling with his mirth;"—and as sorrow for sin is not genuine except when it leads to thankfulness for Divine promises of mercy,—so neither, on the other hand, is gratitude for benefits received of the most excellent sort,—except when it is accompanied and characterized by a deeper sense of the frailties which have made us unworthy of such goodness.

In the third place, our days of thought,—or of solemn consideration of our state,—may be either on account of *important changes* in our condition, which have already taken place,—or which we anticipate as about to occur.

Sometimes it is for affecting changes that have already happened;—as when we are disposed to look back to the departure of those whom we loved,—and whose loss has materially affected our happiness or state in life. Reviews of such interesting occurrences are attended with very good effects,—for they remind us of the *transitory state* in which we are placed;—and all our impressions of the objects and scenes around us become characterized by greater tenderness, when we thus "mourn for the dead whom we loved,"—and feel how soon others will look back to our departure with kindred emotions. This sense

of the "transitory nature" of our present blessings and condition, is also in fine harmony with our general state as subjects of "the kingdom of grace;"—and the feeling of sin seems to be indissolubly connected with all our contemplations of the ruin which death has made on the face of our world.

Perhaps, however, our season of thoughtfulness may have a reference to changes which we contemplate as yet to occur in our own state;—as when we are about to enter on any new course of life,—or to form any connexion that promises to affect materially our future well-being.

It is good and becoming in man to look thoughtfully towards such changes in his journey,—and devoutly to implore the favour of that Providence whose "eye never slumbers nor sleeps,"—but watches with incessant care over all the paths in which the journey of life is performed. Such devout imploring of Divine protection, however, will also bring to the suppliant a feeling of his own unworthiness of the mercy he is seeking to obtain,—or an impression of his liability to act unsuitably to the grace he is anxious to obtain. Yet this feeling of unworthiness will be relieved, if it is of the true kind,—by the recollection that goodness and mercy are characteristic of

all the courses of Divine Providence,—that good is made to come even from evil,—and that whatever sorrows may yet await us in life,—our best refuge, amidst all distresses, must ever be that Divine goodness which afflicts us only in "loving-kindness."

Here also accordingly we see the mixed but interesting nature of the graces that are suitable to man; —and hence we learn the value of such seasons of thankfulness for the cultivation of these graces,—and for the best and happiest state of the human soul.

Indeed it is a pity that such seasons are not more generally embraced by men for the consideration of the events of their lives;—for nothing is so wonderful as our own individual histories, when we take an enlarged and thoughtful review of the series of events that have entered into them;—and in stating, therefore, the rules of a good life, it is impossible not to recommend this frequent "consideration of our ways," as among the most excellent methods of enabling us to follow out, in its true direction, the path in which Divine Providence intended us to walk,—and of thus securing to us all the happiness which is compatible with the mixed and suffering state in which we are placed.

SOCIAL RELATIONS OF LIFE.

We have now gone over all the varieties of a day,—and have endeavoured to show in what manner these may be spent so as to enable man, amidst all changes, to sustain the character of a Living Temple. We have not, however, particularly noticed, that, during all the engagements into which these varieties of his day may summon him, man still acts in the view of his fellow-men,—and with relation to their feelings and conduct. This view of his condition, however, is one which cannot be overlooked in the delineation of a good life;—for there is no other circumstance of his lot that gives occasion to a greater variety of duties,—while, at the same time, those relations in which he stands to others, are so distinct and interesting, as to afford

an opportunity for a display of his obligations, of which all minds may feel the application.

This, then, leads us to the grand duty of Christian charity in all its branches;—for love to man is the principle which the Divine Teacher has chiefly endeavoured to inculcate,—and under which he considers all the other parts of human duty, in so far at least as the connexion of men with each other is concerned, as capable of being arranged. "Love," says the Apostle, "worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

And it is with deep insight into the nature and relations of men, that this truly-divine principle has been raised to this pre-eminent rank;—for the connexion of men with each other, as inhabitants of the same world, and governed by the same hopes and fears,—the same laws,—and the same interests,—is of the most touching and instructive kind when properly viewed;—and there can be no question, that what is chiefly wanted for the perfection of our condition,—considered as beings who have to act along with others in a great variety of most interesting relations,—is the universal prevalence of that kindliness and good-will to man, which it is the great object of the Author of Christianity to incul-

cate,—and by the pre-eminence of which, in his doctrine, his system of duty is peculiarly distinguished from that of all the other institutions that have aimed at the improvement of the human race.

There are then, fortunately, certain relations in which men stand to each other, some more and others less comprehensive,—which are pointed out by Nature herself, and which offer themselves to our view on the most superficial consideration of the place which man holds in life. We cannot, then, do better, with the view of illustrating this subject, than avail ourselves of these distinctions as pointed out to us by Nature;—and the adoption of this mode of examination will at once maintain the living unity of our subject, and save us from that minuteness and particularity of detail which has so commonly prevailed in similar treatises,—but which have rather seemed to take all interest from the subject, than to place it in that intelligible and pleasing form in which it is desirable that it should be exhibited.

These relations are the following:—First, that of man as the member of a domestic circle or family, which is the fundamental relation of human life;—secondly, as a friend or intimate of some other indi-

viduals whom he has chosen as his particular associates;—thirdly, as a member of a neighbourhood;—fourthly, as a being surrounded by others who are exposed to suffering and distress of many various kinds;—fifthly, as a person exposed to the enmity of others;—next, as a member of a public community;—and, lastly, as one of the universal family of the human race.

There is obviously nothing forced in the selection of these topics, for they are derived from distributions made by Nature herself;—and the rules which they suggest are such as can be made available by every man in the ordinary intercourse of life.

FIRST, THE FAMILY RELATION.

It will at once occur, as the great principle applicable to this view of our condition, that the man who conducts himself in the manner most suited to his situation, is the person who has all the natural feelings of his heart in the *kindliest* and most *vigorous operation*,—and who manifests their existence in the most pleasing and effective manner.

It is, in short, love,—natural and human love in

its purest and most fundamental form,—that is here chiefly wanted;—and thus the value of the great principle of Christian charity presents itself to our notice on the very first aspect of the social condition of man,—and as the chief requisite for the perfection of that relation which is destined to prepare him for all the others in which, with respect to his fellow-men, he can be placed.

And Nature herself has signified the value which she has attached to the cultivation of this principle, in the daily intercourse of domestic life, by having made the feelings which bind parents and children,—brothers and sisters,—relations of every degree,—and all indeed who dwell with us in the same house, and who participate in our most private interests,—the most vigorous,—and tender,—and pleasant to be indulged,—and, it may be added, the last to be eradicated from the human heart, of all those which form the supremely beautiful mechanism of the human constitution.

There are, indeed, other passions in the human heart which occasionally seize it with more overwhelming force;—but there are none whose existence is so incorporated with the very elements of our being,—which maintain their influence with so

steady and permanent a duration,—or which are so apt to return with deep interest, when all other passions and interests have faded, and to make the last hours and moments of life a heart-trying retrospect of the scenes which first opened on us in "the morning of our days," or a renewal of those affections, which first bound us to the society of our kindred.

It deserves, accordingly, to be particularly remarked, that so efficacious have these fundamental arrangements of Nature actually become, that there are few disquietudes of life that may not be effaced from the mind of the man who can at any time find "a quiet resting-place" amidst the kindly affections of his own home;—and, on the other hand, that the utmost prosperity of life is of small avail to him who has no pleasure in the society of his kindred, but who finds in the bosom of his family a constant source of irritation and dissatisfaction,—or who has but an *imperfect* relish of the pure happiness which the enjoyment of domestic felicity is fitted to give to better-constituted hearts.

We may then, upon this view of the arrangements of Nature, and of the place which she has given to our household affections, adopt the following conclusions:—

In the first place, that these are of more importance to the real soundness of the human heart, and to the enjoyment of all its truest and most pervading pleasures, than any other feelings which have a relation to wider but less touching arrangements,—that they are the very principles of health and freshness to our moral nature,—and that there must be an essential and incurable want in any mind that is insensible to their power.

And hence it follows, in the second place, that the man who neglects the cultivation of these primary affections for any thing else in life, is sacrificing that enjoyment which is fundamental,—and the very life-blood of his heart,—for gratifications which in themselves can never be so endearing, and which, indeed, should always have a reference to the enjoyment of these primary and fundamental affections.

It follows, from the same general view, in the third place, that he who is prevented, by any fatality in his lot, from the liberal and free indulgence of such feelings, is in fact a greater sufferer, and in a more important point, than the man who, amidst many privations, of which the former knows nothing, has yet his kindly and household affections in full

operation, with every mean of gratifying them. Indeed Providence, in the wonderful equality of its arrangements, thus often compensates to the poor, by the purity and warmth of their domestic joys, for their want of the more external enjoyments which she sometimes lavishes on those whom she at the same time dooms to partake of them with a solitary and unparticipated relish.

And, in the last place, it follows, that any heart that is insensible, from natural constitution or depraved habits, to these household endearments, wants the best elements of true moral goodness, as well as the sweetest springs of human satisfaction.

Every man, therefore, who is desirous of giving to his life its most perfect form, and of reaping from his mode of conducting it the truest and fullest measure of enjoyment,—will make it his first study to be kind and obliging to all who live with him in the same house. If the more endearing relations of husband and wife, or parent and child, do not characterize his home,—there are, at least, *some* individuals to whom he is more closely bound, and who supply to him the place of these more genial affections;—and a well-constituted mind may derive from the cultivation of such affections, as his

actual relations to others permit him to enjoy,—often some of the quietest and purest, if not the most endearing satisfactions, which the society of home is capable of affording.

There is something fundamentally sound in every mind in which these affections flourish with kindly power;—it is a great defect in any character,—whatever may be its other accomplishments,—to remain unmoved or sullen amidst the genial endearments which domestic life, in all its forms, is capable of affording;—and there is great truth and propriety in the common remark,—that "the character of a man may be better known from his conduct in his own house,—than from any of the aspects which it assumes in more public life."

We may say the same thing of the purity and freshness of his *pleasures*;—for the happiest, as well as the best man is always the person,—who conducts himself, amidst the duties and the enjoyments of home, with the greatest propriety,—and the truest relish.

RELATION OF INTIMATE ASSOCIATES.

We do not here intend to enter upon the question respecting the nature and obligations of friendship,—a subject which occupied so much of the attention of the great writers of antiquity,—and which, after them, has been discussed at great length by many modern authors of high name. Pythagoras, whose influence on the opinions of antiquity was so remarkable, and all whose ideas and institutions are so worthy of notice,—insisted so much on the importance of this relation, that he has called it the "bond of all the virtues,"—and "Pythagorean friendships," not less than "Platonic loves," became phrases in common use.

We merely take it for granted, however, without entering on the niceties of this question,—that almost every man has some individuals with whom he is more intimate than with others,—to whom he is accustomed to unbosom himself freely,—and in whose society he seeks relief from the languor which is apt to steal over all men from continued solitude, or from intercourse only with domestic relatives.

The choice of such associates, or intimate acquaintances, does not entirely depend upon ourselves;—it results, in most cases, from the situation in life in which we happen to be placed,—and from the greater or less extent of the opportunities of selection that are afforded us;—for we take it for granted, that a man can scarcely live without some persons who stand to him in this relation,—and that it is his duty to avail himself of such opportunities of making the selection, as, by his peculiar situation in life, he is able to command.

There must, of course, be great variety in the sentiments with which men are bound to persons thus, in some measure, forced on their intimacy;—and, in most cases, it is not to be inferred, that the rules relating to friendship, in the strictest sense of that term, are applicable to all the instances in which we find ourselves in intimacy with some individuals.

Nothing, however, is more certain, than that a man's happiness and character depend, to a very great degree, on the choice which opportunities have enabled him to make of his associates;—and, indeed, this influence is far greater and more important than those who have not considered the subject are probably disposed to believe. We so naturally imbibe

the sentiments and modes of action which belong to those into whose company we fall;—and this influence is exerted over us so unconsciously and gradually,—that even the firmest and most independent character could scarcely continue, under one unvarying influence of this kind, to display precisely the same aspect which it would have manifested if circumstances had forced it, for a considerable time, into an entirely different connexion.

No rule of life, then, is more important than that every man should endeavour, in so far as he has opportunity, to make a judicious and wise selection of those with whom he associates;—because, upon the choice which he makes in this respect, his whole moral character,—and his finest and most influential modes of feeling and acting will depend;—and, consequently, his attainment or loss of the measure of worth and of happiness which is competent to him in life.

The choice being made, however, the following are the rules which must be observed by those who would conduct themselves as good men, in so far as this relation is concerned.

In the first place,—perfect honour, and entire confidence of feeling, ought to pervade and sanctify

this relation. Indeed, this trust in each other, independent of all the forms and rules that bind those who are not so connected, is the characteristic condition of this relation. In the great intercourse of life,—we may be allowed to meet men on the supposition, that they will each be disposed to gain for themselves all the advantages which they can command, even at the expense of others,—or, by availing themselves of their ignorance or weakness;—and the rule commonly acted upon in such general intercourse, whether well or ill-founded, is, that every man must look to himself. But, in our conduct towards our intimate friends, it must be understood, that the maxims of perfect honour and liberal feeling are at all times to be observed;—and that the very circumstance of our standing to them in that relation presupposes the existence of this spirit of confidence and good intention. Intimates, in a word, must act towards each other on the principles of gentlemen, or men of honour, however the *great business* of life may be conducted by an attempt, on the part of each individual, to gain for himself all the advantages which his circumstances or talents enable him to command.

Besides this liberality of feeling and conduct,

there must also be in him, who would approve himself a good associate or friend,—a disposition to cement good feeling by *kindly actions*,—or *services*.

And, in the last place, when circumstances demanding more strenuous exertion occur, he must be ready to stand by his friend, even at great hazard to himself,—and to consider such hazard as justified by the sanctity of that relation, in which, during more easy and peaceful circumstances, he had placed himself to his associate.

In the domestic relation, then, which is the base of all others, it is chiefly the *natural affections* of the human heart that form the principle of union,—and give to the relation its value and consecration. In the intercourse of intimate friends or associates,—it is the *principle of honour and trust*,—or a determination to act as men, who are disposed to take no improper advantage,—but rather to throw all the narrow and selfish maxims *of the world* aside, and to treat each other with the free spirit and kind intentions of persons, who believe that they are met by corresponding sentiments on the part of those whom they trust.

A *good* friend or associate, consequently, is one who is possessed of this trustworthy disposition,—

who is also ready to do any act of kindness to those with whom he is connected,—and who, in cases of emergency, will consider the relation of intimacy so sacred, as to justify him even in making great sacrifices for the sake of his friend.

One of the most fortunate things that can happen in the life of any man,—or one of the best gifts which Providence, in its bounty, can have bestowed, is to have so ordered our lot, that we have it in our power, and are disposed, to avail ourselves of the society of the worthy and accomplished.

RELATION OF NEIGHBOURS.

Natural feelings bind men strongly to each other, when they are connected by any of the closer relationships of life;—and enlightened reflection on such relationships is fitted to add much to the force of these feelings, or to set them in a very interesting light.

It is interesting to consider, that those who are born in the same family with ourselves have, of all the myriads of human beings, been placed by Nature in so close a connexion with our interests and feelings.

It is, in the same manner, affecting to think, that our associates have also, of all human beings, been presented to our choice by the wise appointments of Divine Providence itself;—and, by an extension of the same mode of thought, it is impossible not to feel, that those who come more immediately under our observation, by being placed in the same neighbourhood with ourselves, are strongly recommended to our love and sympathy by the reflection, that while there are innumerable human beings who people the same world with ourselves, our neighbours comprise the whole of this vast assemblage in whose interests we can take a visible and palpable concern.

There are some situations, however, in which this relation is of more importance than others. In the crowd of great cities, our nearest neighbours are almost lost to our regard amidst the multitude of fellow-creatures who everywhere surround us,—and this feeling of neighbourhood is, accordingly, in such situations, less entertained or regarded;—but in smaller societies, the relation becomes more distinct and palpable,—both because all the actions of our associates are brought more closely under observation,—and because our happiness or comfort

are more dependent on the good or bad fulfilment of the duties which that relation implies.

And it is hence, that, in all such situations, the epithet of a *good* neighbour is in common use, and is employed as a term of high commendation.

Indeed it is instructive and interesting to remark how much good or ill may be done by an individual in such situations, according as he is qualified to fulfil the demands of this relationship, or to neglect and abuse them.

We thus sometimes see a person whose presence adds immeasurably to the enjoyments and comfort of all who are connected with him,—who seems to have a pleasure in ministering to the gratification of others,—and whose presence diffuses a feeling of serenity and satisfaction over the whole of the space to which his influence extends.

And there are other individuals of an opposite character, who are the dread and dislike of those who surround them,—who seem to have a pleasure in promoting wrath and dissension wherever their influence extends,—and whose single power is thus capable of blasting, or at least of taking greatly from, the enjoyment of existence within the little circle which, if they had been better disposed, it should

have been their pleasure and study to have made happy.

A *good* neighbour, then, is one who, in the first place, makes it his business to promote *peace* and *good-will* among those who surround him,—and who considers no attentions too small which are capable, in any degree, of augmenting the comfort or promoting the self-satisfaction of the human beings over whom his situation has given him influence.

This character will be enhanced, if, in the second place, the person who holds it is studious to promote all *plans* that are fitted to add to the substantial and permanent comfort of the society with which he is connected,—who seeks to beautify even the face of inanimate nature for their good,—and is anxious to set such measures in operation as may gain them a high state of respectability and comfort.

It is farther necessary, to the perfection of this character, that it should have respect to the *moral improvement* of the beings whom it wishes to benefit;—and as the moral and religious aspects of men are by far their highest and most important characteristics, every truly enlightened man will consider the exaltation of these as the most desira-

ble of all the good deeds in which, for their welfare, he can busy himself.

In the last place, a *good example* in the individual himself who thus aims at the welfare of his neighbours, is among the most effectual of all the influences which he can put forth for their well-being;—and he who wishes to do all the good that his situation and powers permit, will be especially careful, that, amidst his other labours, the evil influence of his own bad example may not detract from the amount of happiness which, by other means, he may be in a condition to effectuate.

It is interesting to think, that there is scarcely any man so limited in his powers, or humble in his station, as not to be capable of doing much good, or promoting, by his kind and obliging behaviour, much happiness and comfort among his neighbours; —and every man who wishes to give to his life its best possible character, will be especially anxious to acquit himself in this capacity to the utmost extent of his ability.

RELATION TO THE DISTRESSED.

Many circumstances in the arrangements of nature point out the importance of the duties implied in this relation.

In the first place, the afflicted are everywhere brought under our notice;—for there is no condition of life in which some individuals are not to be found who are legitimate objects of our pity and beneficence.

In the second place, every human being has his own share of suffering;—and Nature seems thus to signify to the heart of every man, that she expects from him that assistance to his fellow-men, which becomes those who themselves know what it is to have been in sorrow.

In the third place, the feelings which attach us to the case of the unfortunate, are among the most effective and powerful which have a place in our nature.

And, in the last place, the gratification of these feelings, by the performance of good deeds to the distressed, even where such active exertion is obstructed by the most revolting circumstances, is one

of the purest and most delightful sources of pleasure which the heart of man is capable of enjoying;—for most assuredly there is no person who has tasted the luxury of having been the cause of relief to the distressed, who would hesitate to prefer that pleasure to almost every other that belongs to our condition.

In conformity with these arrangements of Nature, it is interesting to remark, that the Author of Christianity has given to the virtue of active compassion to the afflicted a very important place in his system of duty.

His own example, indeed, was the finest of all patterns of this grace;—for he went about healing the diseased, and comforting the sorrowful, and speaking peace to the afflicted,—and he thus seemed to signify to men of all future times, that a similar occupation of their talent was the best employment to which they could devote it.

He has also enforced the practice of this duty by explicit exhortations, and illustrated it by some of his most beautiful parables.

And, in announcing the rule according to which every man shall at last be pronounced to have succeeded or failed in establishing for himself a title to

the heavenly kingdom, it is pre-eminently striking to remark, that he has fixed on this single virtue as the rule of judgment. "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was naked, and ye clothed me: sick, and ye visited me: in prison, and ye came unto me.——Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.——Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

Every good man therefore must, in compliance with this recommendation of his Lord, devote himself sincerely and actively to the care of the distressed. In great cities, where multitudes of human beings are assembled, and where, of course, there must be many whose cases are apt to pass without being known or attended to, there are necessarily many opportunities for the exercise of this virtue;—and it is pleasing to think, that the true genius of the Christian faith has in this instance been distinctly felt,—and that, in all such accumulations of human beings, there are many who "seek out the cause which they know not," and who "go about doing good."

But there is no situation in which distress, in some

form or other, may not be found;—and a well-disposed mind can thus nowhere be without opportunities of exercising one of the most important virtues,—and of tasting one of the purest pleasures of our human condition.

Mere sympathy, however, must not be considered as discharging all the obligations of this duty;—on the contrary, there is no species of labour or of disgust which we must not be willing to encounter, if we would fully fulfil the commandment of our Lord;—and he only who thus devotes himself to *active* exertions can feel the great recompense with which such labours of love are always fraught.

The reward itself, however, is of unspeakable value;—and happy above all other men is he, of whom it can be said, that, like the benevolent Founder of our faith, he "goes about,"—wherever distress is found,—"doing good."

RELATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE US WRONG.

It is not only true, that there is great distress in life, but that no man can live amidst his fellow-men without being exposed to many things which, if

taken keenly, are fitted to place him in a state of perpetual irritation and contest.

This could not well be otherwise, where every man is constituted the preserver of his own interests,—where the motives of conduct are in a great measure hid from those who see only the outward actions which they prompt,—and where interferences of interest are so apt either actually to occur, or to be apprehended as existing.

Much offence, or many causes of irritation, must therefore be constantly occurring to every man, unless he is fortified by principles and guided by habits which set him above this influence;—and there are several obvious considerations which must have, in all ages, suggested the propriety of overlooking much of the offence with which life abounds, —and of cultivating a spirit of forbearance and forgiveness.

For, in the first place, by far the greater number of these offences are of such a kind, that there is more real dignity in overlooking than in resenting them.

And, in point of fact, when we look back upon the multitude of offences that have formerly destroyed our peace, we are able to perceive, that, in by

far the greater number of cases, they now seem to us scarcely worthy to have awakened even a passing feeling of irritation,—and that our happiest reflections relate to those occasions on which we have been able to overlook and despise them.

Nor, in the next place, is there any incompatibility between such forbearance and the most firm assertion of our own rights,—or the most manly defence of our own dignity;—on the contrary, men commonly appear little and pusillanimous exactly in proportion to their disposition to take offence,—and no man is more feared in his *righteous indignation* than he who is habitually actuated by a spirit of peace.

In the last place, all just and enlightened views of human nature,—and of the motives of human actions, lead to opinions respecting the actual motives of men, which have a tendency to lessen our offence at any interferences of interest which their conduct may seem to present;—and the same enlightened views also suggest, that more is in every case to be gained by conciliation and good temper, than by a hasty and forward assertion of our claims to respect.

In fact, it is obvious, that unless this good spirit of forgiveness is cherished somewhere or other,

human life would become a scene of perpetual contention;—and quarrels would but be aggravated and hostilities imbittered, till all regard to the original causes of wrath would be lost in the new sources of strife which the progress of the aggression could not fail to create.

We commonly describe this duty by the phrase "forgiving of injuries;"—but perhaps a juster expression of its nature is that of "overlooking offences;"—and this latter mode of speaking seems to convey at once an idea both of the true nature of the duty,—and of the dignity which belongs to it.

This also, however, is a grace of great importance in the Christian system,—and which, indeed, holds so conspicuous a place in it,—that it has been considered as characteristic of it.

There is no question that exhortations to this "overlooking of offences" pervade the whole of the discourses of our Lord;—and it is a beautiful feature of his religion, that he has incorporated a recommendation to the discharge of this duty with our daily prayer.

Nor is the motive which he has suggested as proper to lead to this duty less worthy of our consideration;—he has taught us to expect "forgiveness of

our offences, as we also forgive those who have offended us;"—and the whole strain of his doctrine is fitted to suggest that we should be more anxious to obtain the remission of our sins against God,—than to visit with relentless hostility the transgressions of our fellow-men.

Finally, he himself gave a beautiful and never-to-be-forgotten example of the exercise of this grace, when, under the endurance of the greatest of all outrages from mankind, he thus prayed for them,—"Father, forgive them,—for they know not what they do."

Every good man, therefore, must, like his blessed Master, be "slow to wrath,"—and ready "to forgive;"—he must overlook the multitude of offences;—and be willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of peace. This conduct is manly and enlightened,—and it is in the purest spirit of Christian charity.

RELATION TO SOCIETY IN GENERAL.

This relation leads to the consideration of *public spirit*,—a virtue of a high order in the catalogue of

graces,—and pre-eminently fitted to give dignity and grace to human character.

Some constitutions of civil society are more favourable to the nourishment of this virtue than others;—and in general it may be stated, that the constitutions of ancient times were better fitted to generate this grace than those which characterize modern communities. It was hence that the men of Athens and of Rome were led to take such an interest in all the affairs of the state,—and that by means of this interest their characters assumed so high a rank among the men of all the times which history has recorded.

In almost all states, however, there is a disposition in the multitude of the people to overlook, or become insensible, to their relation to the community; —their private cares occupy their whole attention, —and they only become sensible of their connexion with a commonwealth by the demands which are occasionally made on them,—often not very pleasant demands,—for their contributions to its support. They are, hence, often led to regard it rather with aversion than with respect;—and all public spirit is sunk in their laborious endeavours to promote their own welfare,—or is subverted by the dis-

likes which are generated by the exactions to which this connexion exposes them.

It is, however, a beautiful appointment of Nature, that even the multitude of men contribute most effectually to the good of the whole, by this laborious application to their private interests;—and that the want of *public spirit* is supplied in them by the satisfaction which they derive from seeing the good effects of the public provisions in that flourishing state of their domestic concerns to which industry and perseverance, even in the humblest line, commonly lead.

But there are other individuals in every community who are especially called to the cultivation of this spirit;—and a perfect character cannot exist where this lively and benevolent interest in the good of the whole is wanting.

Its existence in any individual implies the presence of enlightened and comprehensive views respecting the general good;—it leads to some of the most manly and useful virtues that can expand the heart or beautify the fancy,—and it will manifest itself, whenever it exists, by a ready co-operation with every scheme that has as its object the improvement of the community in any form.

It is to the existence of this spirit in certain individuals that we are indebted for those fine specimens of human society which have commanded the respect of all times;—and no works that are fitted to beautify or improve particular communities, are likely to be executed where this public interest in the affairs of the state is wanting.

Hence, this virtue derives its importance in the general description of a good life;—and its attainment is one of the best and most beneficial states in which any mind can exist.

When well managed, it approaches man nearer, than even the due regulation of his private affairs, to the rank of a perfect subject of that universal kingdom which embraces the interests of all times and of all worlds.

It is, consequently, in a pre-eminent sense, a Christian virtue,—and most suitable in the characters of those who aspire to be disciples of Him, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

RELATION TO THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, AND TO ALL THE INTELLIGENT OFFSPRING OF GOD.

This leads to the consideration of charity in the most extensive meaning of the term;—and surely it might have been supposed that feeling, as men do, that they are all the inhabitants of one wonderful and magnificent world,—all objects of the kind providence and tender mercy of God,—all bound together by many common interests and wants,—and all gifted with hopes and aspirations which lead them to anticipate some more glorious manifestations of the boundless love of their common Father, their most delightful thought would have been, that they are all members of one family,—and all moving towards one final and greater home.

And this, assuredly, would be the prevailing feeling of men towards the whole human race,—were it not for the operation of certain prejudices and erroneous modes of thought,—which seem to have existed, under varying forms, at all times and in all countries,—but which it is the business of true wisdom to remove,—and by the removal of which only, it is possible to give to mankind that

"perfect charity" which embraces, in the bonds of brotherly love, the whole family of man.

These erroneous modes of conception may be reduced to the four following:—

In the first place, there seems to have prevailed among men at all times a belief that the whole human race are not equally objects of the essential benevolence of the Creator,—but that some portions of them are regarded by him with partiality, and loaded with blessings,—while others are shut out from any such testimonies of his regard.

In the second place, there is an equally general impression or belief,—that some portions of the human race are not only useless as parts of the vast scheme of things,—but hurtful to the promotion of those designs which God, by the arrangements of his universal kingdom, is carrying forward.

In the third place, the varieties of manners,—of interests,—and of moral character which exist among men,—and which so remarkably discriminate some tribes and families from others,—have been very generally regarded as legitimate causes of hatred or scorn on the part of those who considered themselves as possessed of the most approved distinctions.

And, lastly, it has been very generally believed

that by far the greater portion of the human race are destined for eventual destruction,—and reprobation, —and are, consequently, not worthy of the brotherly kindness of those who regard themselves as the only destined inheritors of the heavenly kingdom.

We appeal to the consciousness of every individual whether these are not the impressions which mankind are disposed to entertain respecting the situation,—the characters,—and the destinies of each other,—or of the greater portion of the richly-endowed family of which they form a part;—and surely we cannot wonder that while such impressions remain, —that charity, which embraces the whole offspring of God in impartial love,—should be limited and perverted in its influence upon the human heart.

With the view, then, of counteracting these errors, it ought to be considered, in the first place,—and with reference to the first of the misconceptions we have stated,—that God has testified his essential love towards the whole human race, by having made them all partakers of many blessings,—by having given them all equally a place in this magnificent portion of his dominions,—by having made them all equally objects of his providential care,—and by having subjected each of them to as careful and

kind a training as if for that individual alone the whole arrangements of nature and providence had been established.

God is indeed training them by different methods, and employing them for different purposes in the plan of his government;—and hence he has gifted them with all varieties of powers and of opportunities;—but all this is only because his essential benevolence is equal towards them all,—and because he intends that that benevolence shall be displayed by employing them in purposes which, to his wisdom, appear best adapted for securing the good of the whole.

The most untutored wanderer amidst the wilds of Nature is thus equally cared for by God with the most enlightened and polished inhabitant of civilized society;—and the common Father testifies his equal love for both, by having given them equally a place in his kingdom,—and made them equally to feel that he is "daily loading them with his benefits."

The object to be gained, then, for the removal of this first error, is a clear apprehension of the distinction between the essential love of God,—which is the same towards all his children,—and the *means* which he employs for the manifestations of his love, —or the variety of *purposes* to which, for the pro-

motion of his designs, he sees fit to destine the exertions of his creatures.

And, with the view of removing the second error, —which supposes that a vast portion of the human race are of no use in the kingdom of God,—but, on the contrary, are hurtful to the promotion of its interests,—we ought to settle with ourselves what we mean by the kingdom of God,—and distinguish between the *measures* which he adopts for the promotion of his purposes,—and that *grand and universal scheme*, for the eventual realization of which all the subordinate arrangements which vary the aspect of his dispensations are intended.

When we take this comprehensive view of the kingdom of God,—as embracing the interests of all times and of all worlds,—we shall find little difficulty in apprehending, that, however some individuals or nations may, to our limited and partial view, seem to act as impediments in the way of the progressive counsels of God,—it is only because we see not at all moments the relation of these seeming obstacles to the actual movement, that we are led to view them as hinderances and hurtful interruptions,—and that not only the varied talents and employments of the different tribes of men,—but even

their vices, and errors, and hostilities, are all made subservient, by an infinite and overruling Wisdom, to the advancement of a plan,—which embraces the interests of the whole,—and which is so comprehensive in its provisions, that no creature is called into existence which was not necessary for the eventual perfection of the grand and universal scheme.

We cannot, indeed, always tell in what manner Divine Providence so orders the exertions of individuals as to make them conspire, even while they seem to be acting most adverse to his purposes,—in the establishment of his universal dominion;—but, provided we extend our view of the purposes of his government to a sufficiently wide range, we can have no difficulty in believing that not a creature exists, whose being was not necessary for filling some place in the boundless purpose of God;—and surely, the most delightful, and luminous, and satisfactory of all views, is that which thus represents to us,—not only all the contemporaneous tribes of men,—but all their successive generations, as forming one vast whole,—or, indeed, as but portions of a still greater and more comprehensive whole,—the infinite movements and exertions of all the individuals of which are so guided and overruled by the boundless wisdom

of God, as to aid, with all their individual efforts, in the promotion of one entire and final result.

By such comprehensive views of the purposes of Providence, one of the most mischievous of all the errors that lessen the mutual charity of mankind is taken away;—and, instead of thinking that we are entitled to regard any portion of the human race as worthy only of our detestation or scorn, because they seem to us to be useless or noxious parts of the Divine system,—we are led to the far more just and luminous conclusion,—that many, who to us seem "first" in the promotion of the purposes of God "may be last,—and the last first;"—or that, when our view is extended over a sufficiently wide range, some portions of mankind, who seemed to us to be of least importance in the scheme of things, may be found to have been contributing more effectually and extensively to the promotion of the final result, than even those apparently more favoured races, or nations, or individuals, who presumed to believe, that, without them, the grand purposes of Omnipotence could not have attained their consummation,—or, at least, that they only had occupied those important stations, on which the vast interests of the moral dominion of God were chiefly dependent.

With the view of removing the third source of error on this most important topic,—I mean the mistaken belief, that the wonderful diversities of manners,—of interests,—or even of moral character,—which exist among the nations and individuals of our race, are legitimate causes of hatred or scorn on the part of those who have adopted what they consider to be the most approved maxims or modes of life,—it should be considered that these varieties are but manifestations, with respect to the human race, of a plan which pervades all the works and ways of Providence;—insomuch, that of all the individuals that have existed, that now exist, or that are ever to be called into existence,—whether in the intellectual,—the vegetative,—or the inorganic kingdoms,—no two will ever be found, whose whole natures and qualities are in every respect the same. And the idea naturally arises from this view of the arrangements of Providence, that it is by the very means of these varieties that each individual or portion of the whole is adapted for filling a definite place, and promoting the evolution of a distinct result in the entire scheme;—so that these varieties, considered as applicable to the human race, instead of being viewed as causes of aversion, ought only, if we took a

sufficiently wide view of things,—to enhance our feelings of kindness towards all the partakers of a nature, so boundless in its manifestations,—and of which every particular manifestation so evidently contributes to a beneficial result.

Nor ought even the vast differences in point of moral worth which exist among men to be viewed as an exception to this remark,—or be considered as justifying us in treating with hatred any individual or portion of our race. For God and all good beings look not with hatred, but with pity, on the wanderings and follies of men;—and as there is no human being so pure as not to have much that is imperfect in his nature,—so neither is there any so sunk in vice as not to have something that is worthy of the fostering care of Providence,—and that is prophetic of the victory which goodness, even when most overpowered by sin, shall yet attain in the gracious empire of God.—It is our duty farther to recollect, that the greatest offenders will, in every case, be found to have been those who have had the fewest opportunities of knowing what was good or the greatest temptations to do what was evil;—and that, in all cases, there is more of weakness and of misfortune than of positive preference of evil even in the conduct of those, who, to our common modes of obser-

vation and of thought, seem to be covered with the most presumptuous guilt.

With such views, we shall be disposed to entertain a far juster and more Christian idea of the sources of that guilt, which, to the sinner himself, is so awful a source of his own unhappiness, than is suggested by the thoughts we are more in the habit of indulging,—and should feel, not our hostility,—but our pity and tenderness,—awakened towards a race of beings,—who are all labouring under one common calamity,—but who are all, likewise, subjects of that "grace and forgiving mercy," which God has been pleased, by the mission of his beloved Son, to offer, with boundless pity, to even "the chief of sinners."

In the last place, such views open up to us very different prospects from those commonly entertained respecting the final condition of all the varieties of men, and dispose us to believe, and to triumph in the belief,—that when our view of the Divine kingdom is extended over a sufficiently wide space,—there is no individual of the whole family of man,—of whom we are entitled to say, that he may not yet,—under the ameliorating discipline of Divine goodness and wisdom,—become a fellow-inheritor with ourselves of all the happiness, and all the glory, which

the future revolutions of the universe, conducted as these are by infinite wisdom, and love, and power,—are yet, in the lapse of everlasting ages,—to disclose.

And thus we are permitted to consider ourselves as all belonging to a family, which is finally to be gathered into "one fold under one Shepherd,"—and which, though sent, like the different members of the same households in time on different paths of life,—and with different purposes in view,—are yet not less children of the same common home, and equal objects of the paternal love of God.

This is the charity of the Gospel, in its widest and purest form;—and, as there is no mode of thought relative to the whole human race,—and, indeed, to the countless offspring of God,—that is so pleasant to be indulged,—that seems to cover the whole face of creation with such resplendent and beautifying lustre,—or that is so friendly to all the best affections and most useful sympathies of the human heart,—it is the more to be regretted, that the prevailing errors of mankind so much dispose them to adopt very different views,—and to consider themselves rather as rivals and enemies,—than as members of one family,—and final heirs of one heavenly inheritance.

To all his other excellencies, however, a truly

good, and wise man must add charity, which is the "very bond of perfectness;"—and it is hence that we see how justly the Author of our religion raised this grace to the high rank in his system which it unquestionably holds,—and how finely, after branching out into all the duties that bind men together in the more contracted circles of life,—as members of one household,—as friends and associates,—as neighbours,—as inhabitants of a world where there is much suffering,—as exposed, in their intercourse with each other, to many causes of offence,—and as subjects of the same commonwealth,—it rises, by these gradations, to its most comprehensive form,—and embraces, in the spirit of universal love, the whole family of mankind,—and all that feel and think within the boundless expanse of the Creator's empire.

Such is charity,—that "most excellent of all gifts,—the very bond of perfectness,—without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God;"—and the most richly-gifted minds,—and they who in their attainments approach nearest to the true spirit of the Gospel,—are they who feel this grace in its most comprehensive and abiding influence.

And "so now abideth faith,—hope,—charity,—these three,—but the greatest of these is charity."

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING THE OPINION WE SHOULD FORM OF MEN,—AND THE BEST MODE OF ACTING WITH THEM.

Our first observation relates to the opinion we should entertain respecting mankind in general, notwithstanding any experience we may have had of their worthlessness or cruelty.

Most men who have had large intercourse with the world, have had occasion to express themselves, —sometimes with much unrestrained asperity—respecting the inherent worthlessness and want of principle or of good feeling in men;—and this impression sometimes degenerates into a contemptuous or hostile feeling with respect to human nature in general.

This, however, is a feeling against which every good man ought to be upon his guard. Even the failings of men should be considered with forbear-

ance;—for it is, at all times, better to think well of mankind than to entertain any opinions that dispose us to undervalue the nature of which we are partakers;—and more comprehensive views of the motives, even of the most worthless portion of our race, will go far to undo any impressions as to their essential baseness,—or rather will but strengthen our wish to improve and to bless them.

It is, at the same time, true that there are aspects of the conduct of mankind which are fitted to give us melancholy impressions of what,—not only as individuals,—but as communities,—they are capable of doing when their prejudices or passions are concerned, or have been strongly touched. But these aspects ought not to lessen our good-will to the interests of mankind as a race;—we may be sorry for their aberrations,—we may be humbled because we also belong to a family of beings so liable to act contrary to their own best interests, and to their duty as subjects of the kingdom of God;—but if our own minds are not in a state of perversion,—such views will but augment our desire to be useful to mankind,—and will only awaken our pity for their abuse of gifts which were intended to lead them to far better conduct.

Generally, it is of the utmost importance to every good man,—to cherish an unfeigned and deep affection for the interests of *human nature*;—and, notwithstanding any casual impressions which his experience of their malice may have given him,—to be only more desirous, from such experience, of being an instrument in the hands of Providence of doing them effectual service.

This unfeigned love of mankind has always been an attribute of the most excellent minds that have adorned or blessed our nature;—and it is one of the most healthful and delightful feelings which can be recommended to the cultivation of men.

But, in the second place,—it is true that, in most cases, those who devote themselves to the service of mankind on a great scale, or who wish to do them much good,—must lay their account with meeting with opposition,—and, indeed, should be prepared, if circumstances should demand the sacrifice, even to lay down their lives for their well-doing.

We do not mean by this that mankind ever set themselves knowingly and designedly against that which is good and praiseworthy,—under a distinct impression that it is such;—we believe, on the contrary, that so decided is the human heart in its love

of virtue, that it is only when the true nature of what is excellent is hid from the view of men by their passions or prejudices, that they ever have been induced to treat it with injustice;—and we think there is great truth in the very beautiful remark which has been sometimes made,—that no man ever heartily devoted himself to the service of mankind without receiving from them testimonies of affection,—and of gratitude, which have occasionally melted his heart,—and given him the highest ideas of the value of the nature which he sought to benefit.

At the same time it is true that men are strongly attached to their customs and to long-established institutions and modes of thought or of worship,—that they are seldom able to form very just ideas of what is for their real good,—and that their passions are easily awakened when arts are used to persuade them that their habitual institutions or customs are in danger;—and it is easy to understand, that from the effect of all this,—those who are anxious to be the instruments of great changes in the opinions or institutions of men,—are in danger of much opposition to their measures,—may be exposed to much misrepresentation and injustice,—and may even meet with extreme cruelty.

The two best lovers of mankind,—and who are commonly cited as the most perfect specimens of human nature, were both of them engaged in such an enterprise,—and found themselves forced to "lay down their lives" in support of the cause they had undertaken.

Indeed, the conduct of mankind, with respect both to Socrates and to Christ,—seems as if intended by Providence to point out the errors and misapprehensions into which mankind, when their prevailing notions are attacked, are liable to fall,—and the extent of the wickedness, of which, in such circumstances, they may be guilty. In both of these instances,—the picture presented to us by the conduct of the contemporaries of these great friends of humanity,—is an awful compound of inconsistency, —and of cruelty;—and perhaps it is when we see active and disinterested goodness,—and great wisdom,—and good principle, thus beset by the united opposition of multitudes,—and finally overwhelmed by their malice,—that our feelings of contempt and of indignation against the whole race of men, are most apt to be awakened.

Yet neither of these two characters were affected in this manner,—nor permitted one particle of their

love for human nature to be taken from them, by their experience of the injustice of mankind;—and in this respect their history,—as well as that of the men who put them to death,—offers a lesson which all generations of mankind should read,—and study.

Socrates drank the fatal cup,—amidst great anticipations of the immortal honours for which *human nature* is destined;—and Christ not only prayed for forgiveness to his enemies,—but yielded up his life in the belief, that in him,—and in his death,—"all nations should *be blessed.*"

This subject naturally leads us to a third remark,—namely,—that mankind are often employed as instruments in the hand of Providence for the infliction of those sorrows which he sees fit to impose for purposes of good.

In the two cases already noticed, this instrumentality was used against men who deserved the admiration of their kind,—and whom all future times have agreed in venerating.

But God sometimes also employs the evil passions of men as intruments for punishing the delinquencies of their fellows;—and it is not unusual, in private life, to see sometimes the wise and the strong subjected, as a punishment or correction of their

faults, to the contumely or opposition of men, who, upon the whole, are far inferior in both wisdom and power to those over whom Divine Providence, for good purposes, has given them a temporary influence.

It is of great importance for those who wish to be benefited by the dispensations of Providence, to be aware how they ought to act, when God is thus giving them as it were "into the hands of men,"—as a correction of their,—it may be—"secret faults."

Injustice certainly and cruelty ought never to be submitted to by man from his fellow-men;—but there are times when a thoughtful man will be made aware that the hand of God is in the offence which his brethren are committing against him;—and his duty in such cases,—while he carefully avoids every thing that might seem to sanction the injustice of his enemies,—is reverently to bow to the dispensations of Providence,—to use the opposition of men as a mean of bettering his own conduct,—and with devout submission to acknowledge that "God turneth the wrath of man as he does the rivers of water,—and that the remainder of that wrath he can restrain."

In the last place,—it is important for those who

have to act with mankind to be able to exercise that fine compound of firmness and of complaisance,—in which the true beauty,—and most useful result of human conduct consists.

Few men attain to this perfection in conduct. Many men have had reason to regret having been *too easy* in their treatment of mankind;—and a yet greater number, perhaps, have sunk their feelings of kindness in the habitual *sternness* of their mode of dealing with others.

We formerly remarked,—when treating of the active employments of men,—that the most desirable style of conduct is that which unites liberality of principle and of general behaviour,—with strict attention to the forms of business;—and a similar principle is applicable to the social intercourse of men with each other;—for he best avails himself of the services of mankind,—makes most of them,—attaches them most firmly to himself,—and gives his style of behaviour its most becoming excellence,—who is kind and gentle to all men;—but who, at the same time, never relaxes in that vigilance which prevents all imposition,—or in that energy which guides the exertions of all who are under his influence to their most useful purposes.

Those who have the training of youth know that the teachers who best gain the affections of their pupils,—who have least occasion for severity,—and who most effectually do their work,—are those who are watchful to repress even the slightest disposition to perversity or negligence,—and whose love for their charge is, by such perfection of discipline, permitted to display itself without all irritation;—and the same rule is applicable to the whole conduct of mankind with each other. Kindness and energy must go together in every character that is fitted to make the most of that relationship in which Providence has placed mankind with each other,—and by means of which they are destined to be fellow-workers in one great cause.

And thus it is that man, in his intercourse with his fellow-men,—as well as in all his other engagements, still supports the character of a good or loyal subject of the universal kingdom,—feeling intensely his relation to all the other subjects of the same dominion,—and anxious so to avail himself of his connexion with them, as to render both them and himself most available for the fulfilment of the purposes,—which Divine wisdom intended that they should accomplish,—by having called them to the

high honour of being his subjects,—and instruments, under him, of promoting the interests of his reign upon earth.

Thus far with respect to the social relations;—we shall proceed, in the next volume, to some further observations which seem to be necessary for completing the picture of a Good Life, which we are at present engaged in sketching.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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